

# 2001

**Team Manager: Mickey Moran**

**Dr. Mc Kenna Cup.** – No competition in 2001 and 2002

## **Ulster Senior Football Championship**

1	13 <sup>th</sup> May	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-16	Fermanagh	2-13
2	20 <sup>th</sup> May	Brewster Park	Donegal	0-11	Fermanagh	1-09
	8 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>Ulster final</b>	Tyrone	1-13	Cavan	1-11

## **All Ireland Qualifiers 2001**

3	17 <sup>th</sup> June	Brewster Park	Donegal	0-15	Fermanagh	1-06
4	1 <sup>st</sup> July	Newbridge	Donegal	1-16	Kildare	1-17
	26 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Semi final	Galway	1-14	Derry	1-11
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sept.	Semi final	Meath	2-14	Kerry	0-05
	23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept.	<b>All Ireland final:</b>	Galway	0-17	Meath	0-08

## **National Football League. - 2001 Allianz NFL Division 1**

5	29 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2000	Mac Cumhaill Park	Donegal	1-11	Offaly	0-10
6	12 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2000	Tuam	Galway	0-12	Donegal	0-12
7	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2000	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	2-14	Louth	1-10
8	10 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2001	Healy Park	Tyrone	0-13	Donegal	0-10
9	25 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2001	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-08	Dublin	0-11
10	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2001	Killarney	Kerry	0-09	Donegal	0-14
11	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2001	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-11	Roscommon	1-10
12	1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2001 <b>Playoff</b>	Brewster Park	Donegal	3-12	Louth	1-11

**Final** Mayo 0-13 Galway 0-12

Bank of Ireland Ulster Championship/Donegal v Fermanagh

# Resilient Donegal live to fight another day

**DONEGAL.....1-16**  
**FERMANAGH.....2-13**

**DONEGAL'S** resilience in the face of adversity earned them another crack at Fermanagh after a pulsating Ulster Senior Championship preliminary round tie at blistering Ballybofey on Sunday. Two points down with three minutes left Donegal showed tremendous character to haul themselves level with two late frees from their Man of the Match Adrian Sweeney and the stylish Brendan Devenney.

While both sides had their chances to win in the dying stages few could quail that overall a draw was a fair result. The replay has been fixed for Brewster Park, Enniskillen tomorrow (Saturday) at 6-15 p.m.

While this was certainly not a classic for purists the closeness of the contest kept the 10,000 crowd highly entertained for its duration. Donegal manager Mickey Moran was delighted with his sides late comeback.

"It gave me great pride that the boys came back with a never say die attitude in the final minutes. Many other teams would have caved under that pressure when Fermanagh got their second goal. We showed great character. We got out of jail today and now we have to be positive and focussed on the replay," he said.

The game will be most remembered for a hotly disputed Fermanagh goal eight minutes from time when Man of the Match Stephen Maguire fisted a Shane King sideline ball to the net.

Brian Roper, one of Donegal's super second half subs who along with experienced Noel Hegarty played a vital part in their comeback, looked to have taken the ball off the goal line but the

umpire after a few seconds delay awarded the goal despite strong remonstrations from the home side.

Donegal called on all their resources for the final minutes and the deadly accurate Adrian Sweeney saved the day with a well executed 35 metres free to earn another shot at the Ernesiders.

The home side could have snatched a win but Jim McGuinness failed to hit the target at a vital stage and after eight players had possession deep into injury time they failed to get a shot on target before the final whistle.

Fermanagh's manager John Maughan was relieved in the end to get a draw.

"It was a tough game. We knew Donegal would come at us with all guns blazing. We took a while to settle down but we finished strong in the first half. Donegal finished stronger in the end. I have been around for a while and I have experienced the big occasions. I knew it would go to the death. The game is never in the bag until the final whistle," he said.

For Donegal Adrian Sweeney who scored 1-4 was fantastic at full forward and led the Lazarus like comeback at the end. Brendan Devenney is

back to fist best with six measured points - one super effort after half an hour while Damien Diver pressed hard during the game from the centre half back berth.

Paul McGonigle and Eamon Doherty tried hard on their debuts but the rest of the team will certainly need to improve. Fermanagh's Stephen Maguire gave an exhibition on the edge of the square and finished with a personal tally of 1-5.

His effectiveness was facilitated by the prompting of the superb Rory Gallagher at centre half forward. The Fermanagh playmaker who scored six points, four from frees, was well contained in open play by Diver but his accurate delivery from free kick situations was more often than not perfect.

Others to impress for the Ernesiders were left half back Raymond Johnston, centre half Martin McGrath and Shane King.

Donegal got off to a perfect start when four minutes into the tie Andrew Gallagher fed Brendan Devenney. He raced along the endline past his marker Ryan McCloskey and laid the ball on for Adrian Sweeney to fist to the net.

Adrian Sweeney finished a swift three man move involving John Gildea and Paddy Campbell to give the home side a 1-2 to 0-2 lead by the 9th minute.

Mickey Moran must have been delighted with the way Donegal started but as the game wore on Fermanagh settled into the contest. Michael Hegarty picked up a lot of breaking ball around midfield in the early stages but as the game wore on he became anonymous. It is worth noting that all three of Donegal's half forwards did not finish the game. Jim McGuinness did not look at ease during the contest although he couldn't be faulted for effort.

The Ernesiders inspired by Rory Gallagher and Maguire clawed their way back into the contest while Martin McGrath and Raymond Johnston gave them a sound platform mopping up around the crowded midfield area.

After Devenney had opened his account with a fisted effort Rory Gallagher scored the best point of the first half after 28 minutes to level the sides for the first time in the match when he fired the ball over from an almost impossible angle.

Devenney edged Donegal in front again with his second point after shrugging off two strong challenge but the home side were rocked back on their heels when Fermanagh struck for their first goal after 33 minutes of play.

Gallagher launched a sideline ball into the edge of the Donegal square. Two Donegal defenders collided and the ball fell kindly to the awaiting substitute Mark O'Donnell who slotted the ball past Tony Blake.

It was a soft goal and one Donegal must learn from if they are to have a chance in the replay. Midfielder Paul McGonigle responded with a crucial point for the home side to leave the half time score 1-9 to 1-7 in Fermanagh's favour.

Donegal team manager Mickey Moran made two switches at the interval bringing on the experienced Noel Hegarty and Brian Roper for a disappointing Andrew Gallagher and Shane Carr respectively.

Hegarty used his experience well while Roper drew many important free kicks as he ran at the heart of the Fermanagh defence in the second period. Scores were at a premium during a keenly contested third quarter as the game hung in the balance.

Roper levelled the game for the fourth time after 57 minutes. Devenney edged Donegal in front for the first time in 27 minutes when he scored his fourth from a free.

Disaster struck for Donegal when Shane King's lob into the goalmouth was fisted to the net by Maguire. The umpire waited for about

five seconds before raising his flag to award the goal despite strong protests from the Donegal players who felt Brian Roper had cleared it off the line.

Lesser teams would have caved in at that stage but Donegal showed great character with the late show from Devenney and Sweeney earning them a deserved replay.

Indeed the home side could have won it had they not wasted at least two scoring chances at the death. With a total of fifty four frees in all it wasn't a classic and had a stop start them to it.

However, if the replay is as close it will be another riveting contest.

**Donegal:** Tony Blake, Shane Carr, Eamon Doherty, Patrick Campbell, Mark Crossan (0-1), Damien Diver (captain), Raymond Sweeney, John Gildea, Paul McGonigle (0-1), James Gallagher (0-1 free), Michael Hegarty (0-2), Andrew Gallagher, Jim McGuinness, Adrian Sweeney (1-4, two frees) and Brendan Devenney (0-6, three frees).

**Subs used:** Noel Hegarty for Carr, Brian Roper (0-1) for Gallagher (both half-time), Tony Boyle for J Gallagher (45 mins), Martin Coll for M Hegarty (63mins)

**Fermanagh:** Ronan Gallagher, Michael Lilly, Paddy McGuinness, Ryan McCloskey, Neil Cox, Martin McGrath, Raymond Johnston, Paul Brewster, Oliver Mulligan, Kieran Donnelly, Rory Gallagher (0-6, four frees), Tom Brewster (captain), Shane McDermott, Stephen Maguire (1-5) and Shane King (0-1).

**Subs used:** Mark O'Donnell (1-0) for T Brewster (25 mins), Liam McBarron for Mulligan (43 mins), Barry Owens for McDermott (56 mins) and Brendan McBrien for Donnelly (73 mins).

**Referee:** S Prior (Leitrim).

Fermanagh .....1- 9  
Donegal ..... 0-11

## Bank of Ireland Ulster Senior

# Donegal rocked by late O'Donnell goal

**DISASTER WITH a capital 'D' best describes Donegal's Ulster Championship exit at the hands of Fermanagh in this highly charged and enthralling preliminary round replay on Saturday evening last in Brewster Park, Enniskillen.**

Tom Comack reports  
Photographs: Thomas Gallagher

Leading by two points and only minutes to play and looking good for a quarter final showdown with Monaghan, Donegal were rocked with a late and dramatic killer Fermanagh goal. Substitute Mark O'Donnell, who boasts of strong Donegal connections and who hit a crucial goal in the drawn encounter, blasted the ball to the back of the Donegal net to earn Fermanagh a dramatic win.

### Carbon copy goal

A carbon copy of his MacCumhaill Park three pointer six days earlier O'Donnell once more stole in behind the Tironall rearguard to first time long range free into the Donegal area past a stranded Tony Blake.

Unlike last week O'Donnell's strike, coming as it did in the dying seconds, gave down-on-their-knees Donegal no time to respond.

The goal and the defeat was rough justice for a Donegal side who were, for most of the tie the more polished and dominant outfit.

Except in the opening ten minutes and again for a brief spell again after half-time Donegal held the upper hand, with Brian Roper, John Gildea, Noel McGinley, Michael Hegarty, Eamonn Doherty, Mark Crossan and Damien Diver all

sparkling form.

It was the performances of this sextet that saw Donegal go in at half-time 0-7 to Fermanagh's 0-5 in front having really carried the fight to the homestead.

And despite early second half Fermanagh pressure, Donegal had stretched their half time advantage out to three points by the three quarter mark.

And while Fermanagh temporarily reduced the margin with less than ten minutes Donegal were two points clear once more as the game entered the final stretch.

However, an old failing of failing to punish the opposition when they were on the ropes proved Donegal's undoing. For make no mistake about Mickey Moran's men had a number of gilt edged opportunities in the closing minutes to post the insurance score.

With Donegal failing to put the final nail in their coffin Fermanagh kept plugging away and were rewarded for their gritty persistence when O'Donnell struck the killer punch.

### Conceded early ground

Despite conceding early ground to Fermanagh who scored two points courtesy of Rory Gallagher, Donegal settled to their task with admirable industry and were on level terms with points from Adrian Sweeney (2) and one from Brian Roper by the twenty minute mark.

Michael Hegarty and Rory Gallagher traded scores before Donegal took over to land three unanswered points from Brendan Devenney, Jim McGuinness, who was playing well in the half forward line, and Paul McGonagle, to race

into a 0-7 to 0-4 lead. Kieran Donnelly reduced the margin to two points on the stroke of half-time.

### Magical point

In between points from Rory Gallagher and Tom Brewster Brian Roper posted a magical point to maintain Donegal's advantage in the early second half exchanges.

Having withstood an Erne county onslaught Donegal upped the ante and were deservedly three points clear once more as the game entered the final quarter, thanks to a delightful point from play off the boot of John Gildea and an Adrian Sweeney converted free.

However, to their credit Fermanagh refused to surrender and struck back with two pointed frees from sharpshooter Rory Gallagher to bring the margin back to a single point.

But when two minutes later Michael Hegarty raced through to split the town end posts and put Donegal into a two point lead once more. The visitors looked on course for a June 10 shoot-out with Monaghan.

But with Liam McBarron taking control of midfield and with Paddy McGuinness picking up all the breaks around midfield the Erne county pressed forward at every opportunity. A combination of good defensive play and poor shooting saw them miss a number of good opportunities for an equaliser.

### Disaster struck

However, disaster struck just on the stroke of time when a long range free from Tom Brewster was missed in the air by Paddy Campbell. Mark O'Donnell, who could not believe his luck, kept his head to break Donegal hearts with that late strike.

**Donegal scorers:** Adrian Sweeney (0-3), Michael Hegarty (0-2), Brian Roper (0-2) Brendan Devenney (0-1F) Paul McGonagle (0-1), John Gildea (0-1), Jim McGuinness (0-1):

**Fermanagh:** Rory Gallagher (0-7) Mark O'Donnell (1-0), Tom Brewster (0-1), Ciaran Donnelly (0-1):

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Paddy Campbell, Eamonn Doherty, Noel McGinley; Mark Crossan, Damien Diver, Raymond Sweeney; John Gildea, Paul McGonagle; Jim McGuinness, Michael Hegarty, Brian Roper; Johnny McCafferty, Adrian Sweeney, Brendan Devenney: Subs: Noel Hegarty for R. Sweeney; Tony Boyle for J. McCafferty; Martin Coll for J. Gildea:

**Fermanagh:** Ronan Gallagher; Michael Lily, Paddy McGuinness, Ryan McCloskey; Neil Cox, Martin McGrath, Raymond Johnson; Paul Brewster, Liam McBarron; Kieran Donnelly, Rory Gallagher, Tom Brewster; Shane McDermott, Stephen Maguire, Shane King: Subs: Mark O'Donnell for S. McDermott.; Barry Owens for N. Cox: Referee: Brian White (Wexford):

## Score by score

**4 min.:** Mark Crossan fouls Stephen Maguire, Rory Gallagher points 35 metre free: 0-1, 0-0.

**11 min.:** Roy Gallagher hits a high ball from mid-field, looking for Maguire - Donegal defenders anxious to stop Maguire getting possession don't attack the ball which hops once and goes over the bar: 0-2, 0-0.

**13 min.:** Foul on Johnny McCafferty, Adrian Sweeney points well from the wing from 35 metres: 0-2, 0-1.

**16 min.:** Mark Crossan loses possession, Paul McGonigle yellow carded for foul on Rory Gallagher who points the free: 0-3, 0-1.

**16 min.:** Brian Roper, starting to cause major problems for Fermanagh, is fouled. Free is taken quickly, McCafferty finds Raymond Sweeney who passes to Roper who points: 0-3, 0-2.

**19 min.:** Patient build up from defence by Donegal. Diver then releases to Roper who again goes directly at the Fermanagh defence. He's fouled and Adrian Sweeney points the free to bring the sides level: 0-3, 0-3.

**24 min.** Raymond Sweeney wins the ball back, two quick passes later and Michael Hegarty is cutting through to score a fine point: 0-3, 0-4.

**24 min.:** Paddy Campbell fouls Shane King and from 43 metres out on the wing Rory Gallagher punishes with another good free: 0-4, 0-4.

**28 min.:** Early long ball from John Gildea is held spectacularly by Roper who is fouled by Raymond Johnston at the expense of a yellow card. Brendan Devenney points the free: 0-4, 0-5.

**31 min.:** Outstanding midfield fetch by Paul McGonigle, he finds Gildea, Gildea blasts the ball long, Adrian Sweeney wins it, transfers to McCafferty who cuts it back to Jim McGuinness for a sweet point: 0-4, 0-6.

**32 min.:** Roper again involved in a scoring move. This time Paul McGonigle shows remarkable poise and confidence before firing over a great point: 0-4, 0-7.

**35 min.:** Liam McBarron plays a clever ball forward from a crowded midfield. Kieran Donnelly finishes with a point: 0-5, 0-7.

**36 min.:** Mark O'Donnell, later to have a telling influence, enters the fray as a sub. for Shane McDermott.

**Half Time, Fermanagh 0-5, Donegal 0-7.**

**39 min.:** Rory Gallagher slots over a soft free: 0-6, 0-7.

**44 min.:** The Gildea/Roper line re-opens. Gildea's long ball, Roper fetching head high, this time a turn and a solo before Roper pops a point: 0-6, 0-8.

**46 min.:** Rory Gallagher/Stephen Maguire combine, a quick ball releases Tom Brewster, who, despite playing poorly, still has the confidence to shoot from a difficult angle for a fine point: 0-7, 0-8.

**50 min.:** Raymond Sweeney finds John Gildea who, for once, has moved upfield, away from his defensive duties. Gildea scores a magnificent point from distance and shows his delight at a great score: 0-7, 0-9.

**54 min.:** Brendan Devenney leaves the Fermanagh defence in his wake, turns and heads for goal. He fists for a point but is fouled as he does so and despite Ronan Gallagher holding the fisted effort, Donegal get a free which Adrian Sweeney fires over: 0-7, 0-10.

**59 min.:** Remarkable defending by Donegal sees Fermanagh denied any shooting opportunity in an amazing passage of play. However, after all the good work Stephen Maguire wins a free and Rory Gallagher points: 0-10, 0-8.

**63 min.:** Donegal appear to have everything covered in defence but a silly mistake sees possession lost and Rory Gallagher is fouled, Rory pointing the 20 metre free: 0-9, 0-10.

**65 min.:** From the kick-out Donegal appear to fashion the winning score, a perfect riposte to the Fermanagh free. Tony Blake's long thump is missed by Paul Brewster, runs on nicely to be collected by Michael Hegarty who hits a big score: 0-9, 0-11.

**70 min.:** Fourth official is indicating two minutes added time will be played. Donegal players may be distracted, not Tom Brewster. Taking a free quickly, he fires a long, hopeful ball into a crowded Donegal defence. Lurking behind five yellow shirts is one Mark O'Donnell. The ball breaking off Paddy Campbell's hands, away from O'Donnell's marker, Noel McGinley and bang, one touch, and O'Donnell finishes with aplomb, a goal: 1-9, 0-11.

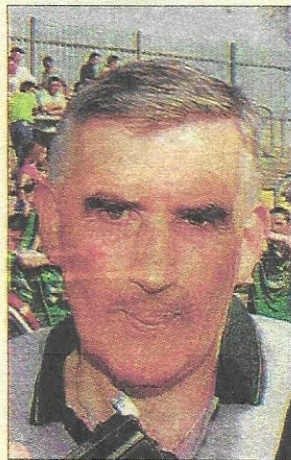
## Man of the Match

At one stage in the first half he was directly responsible for three scores in-a-row, Brian Roper hit a great score, was fouled for two easy frees shortly afterwards and went on to win and use ball judiciously throughout. A grandstand display, Roper will take little comfort from his individual form as Donegal ended up on the losing side.

### By Michael Daly

Unhappy Donegal manager Mickey Moran described Fermanagh celebrations following the final whistle at Brewster Park on Saturday evening as "over the top".

An amazing roller coaster of a game, laden with hard tackles, fouls, frees and some great scores, left RTE rubbing their hands with glee at their decision to broadcast the replay live. It finished with a flourish, a script writer's folly, as Fermanagh fired home a late, late winning goal which turned Donegal stomachs.



## Match Stats

First Half	Goals	Pts.	Frees	Wides
Donegal	0	7	14	4
Fermanagh	0	5	8	3
Second Half				
Donegal	0	4	18	4
Fermanagh	1	4	14	6
Totals				
Donegal	0	11	32	8
Fermanagh	1	9	22	11

**Yellow Cards:** Referee Brian White flashed seven yellow cards - Donegal (5), Fermanagh (2). Jim McGuinness and Paul McGonigle for fouls on Paul Brewster and Stephen Maguire in the first half and Paddy Campbell (foul on Maguire), Tony Boyle (fouls on keeper) and Brendan Devenney were the Donegal men booked. Sean Quinn and Raymond Johnson - both for fouls on Brian Roper were the Fermanagh men who were shown yellow.

## Tactics

Ironically Mickey Moran won this one, but not the game. He learned more from the drawn game and the decision to use John Gildea as a shield to block out Fermanagh ball to Stephen Maguire worked a treat. If anything Moran's only error was his decision to substitute Gildea late in the game.

## Key Moment

Donegal defending a two point lead, 0-11 to 0-9, the fourth official indicates there are two minutes additional time. Long hopeful free from Rory Gallagher evades a Donegal 'square' where there are at least five Donegal shirts visible. The ball falls for Fermanagh sub Mark O'Donnell who slams the ball to the net. Fermanagh snatch their victory, Donegal's world crumbles, the Ulster Championship is over for Mickey Moran's side, the back door beckons.

**Michael Hegarty:** One of his best performances in the county colours, waltzed through for two great scores. His swift second half response just after Rory Gallagher had reduced the margin to a single point should have been the spur to drive his side to victory. 8

BANK OF IRELAND ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER

# Donegal power past poor Fermanagh

DONEGAL ..... 0-15  
FERMANAGH ..... 1-6

Report:  
TOM COMACK  
Photos:  
THOMAS GALLAGHER

**V**ICTORY IN the championship is always sweet, but when that victory is achieved at the expense of the side that snatched success from your grasp a mere four weeks earlier, the sweet smelling odour of success is all the more fragrant.

Donegal players certainly felt so on Saturday evening as they made their exit from Brewster Park, having put Fermanagh to the sword on their home patch, the scene of their smash and grab win four weeks ago.

For make no mistake, this victory was recorded in swash buckling style as the Erne county were made look a pretty ordinary bunch by a Donegal side that were really fired up for the contest.

Not alone did Saturday evenings win lay the Fermanagh bogey it also put to rest any notion of a Brewster Park curse on the counties footballers, remember the U21's, minors and seniors had already bitten the dust at the Enniskillen venue. Thank god for the second chance, or as it was in this case the third.

This win, Donegal's first competitive victory in 2001, is a major shot in the arm to this side who were bound to be low in confidence and who's self esteem was at minus level following what has proved to be a dismal season so far, with five defeats and one draw to show for their efforts.

## GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

It is a great reward too for manager Mickey Moran and his second in command John Joe Doherty who never lost the faith, when many of those around and the wider supporting public was losing theirs. A reward too for the brave selection decisions taken earlier in the week that saw Martin Coll come in at centre back, and Brian McLaughlin and Andrew Gallagher added to the full forward line. In the case of Coll and McLaughlin they did not let the management down as they both played major roles in the success

Coll, without being outstanding held the defence together, while McLaughlin proved an ideal target man, and but for some wayward shooting he would have ran Brendan Devenney close for the man of the match accolade. Andrew Gallagher who won his share of possession undid it all with some very poor finishing.

## FIVE STAR PERFORMANCE

Mention of man of the match Devenney, the general belief once the team selection became public on

Thursday night, was that Donegal needed a big game from the Eunan's star, if they were to come out on top this time around.

And true to form the corner forward did not disappoint, as he turned in a five star performance proving a constant threat to the Fermanagh. He crowned his display with two first half and four second half points, his three points early in the second half were critical as they ended any notion remote and all as it was of a Fermanagh fight back.

## ACCOLADES

However, to lay all the accolades for this win on the head of Devine would be grossly unfair as this was an all out team effort. Every Donegal player on the night won his own personal duel with his opposite number.

Once again Damien Diver and Mark Crossan were completely on top at half back, as they restricted Raymond Johnson and Tom Brewster to bit parts while behind them Paddy Campbell, Eamonn Doherty and Noel McGinley were miserly to say the least, giving nothing away on the rare occasions their goal was threatened.

John Gildea once more was lord and master at midfield. Brian Roper was the pick of the half forwards though he spoiled it all by receiving a red card in the dying minutes. Adrian Sweeney and Michael Hegarty both had their moments too, especially in the first with neither player as conspicuous after the break.

## COSTLY

Roper's sending off may prove very costly, as he will now be out of action for the next four weeks, ruling him out of the next round of the championship and also that crunch relegation playoff with Louth. His absence from the forward line will greatly reduce Donegal's attacking options.

From the off in this winner takes all tie, Donegal looked like a side on a mission, a team with a desire to put the record straight. Inside the first half minute Michael Hegarty had the man in the white coat reaching for the white flag when he raced through the Fermanagh defence.

By the twelve minute mark the umpire had raised his white flag three more times, courtesy of strikes from Adrian Sweeney a free, and one each from play via Brendan Devenney and Brian Roper who were creating panic in the Erne defence, Donegal racing into a four point lead.

## ONE WAY TRAFFIC

With it all one way traffic in the direction of the Fermanagh posts the only real surprise at half-time was that Donegal had only added a further five scores. Given their superiority in the opening forty minutes but for some woeful shooting in front of the posts in which the kicked nine wides to Fermanagh's two, a fifteen point half-time advantage would have not flattered the visitors.

Two quick points from the boot of Rory Gallagher in the opening seven minutes of the second half hinted at a Fermanagh revival, but with Brendan Devenney stepping into the breach the margin was out to ten points by the end of the third quarter.

With Donegal understandably taking the foot off the pedal Ciaran Donnelly and Paul Brewster chipped in with two quick points for John Maughan's men.

Brian McLaughlin finally got his name on the score sheet to maintain Donegal's nine-point advantage.

## LATE GOAL

With the game long over as a contest Ciaran

Donnelly and Brendan Devenney and Liam McBarron and Tony Boyle traded scores before Mark O'Donnell the Fermanagh player to show any appetite for the contest once found the Donegal net for a consolation score.

This was the final score in a game that really never rose to any great heights in terms of quality, with Fermanagh still very much down after last weekends shock Ulster championship exit at the hands of Monaghan.

Regardless of the state of mind of the opposition this was an important physiological win for Donegal who were really down on their luck so far in 2001.

## FREE FOR ALL

The game was marred at the finish with a free for all in the Donegal goal mouth with a number of players from both sides involved. It was from this ruck that Brian Roper who it must be said was skating on thin ice all evening was singled out for instant dismissal.

## Teams and scorers

**Donegal scorers:** Brendan Devenney (0-6,3F), Adrian Sweeney (0-4F), Brian Roper (0-2), Michael Hegarty, Brian McLaughlin and Tony Boyle (0-1) each.

**Fermanagh:** Mark O'Donnell (1-0), Rory Gallagher (0-2,1 from a 45), Ciaran Donnelly (0-2), Liam McBarron, Paul Brewster (0-1) each:

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Paddy Campbell, Eamonn Doherty, Noel McGinley; Mark Crossan, Martin Coll, Damian Diver; Paul McGonagle, Michael Hegarty, Adrian Sweeney; Andrew Gallagher, Brian McLaughlin, Brendan Devenney; Subs: Tony Boyle for A. Gallagher 63 min.; Barry Monaghan for P. McGonagle 74 min.:

**Fermanagh:** Ronan Gallagher; Sean Burns, Paddy McGuinness, Michael Lilly; Barry Owens, Martin McGrath, Niall Cox; Liam McBarron, Paul Brewster; Raymond Johnson, Rory Gallagher, Tom Brewster; Mark O'Donnell, Stephen Maguire, Brendan McBride; Calm Monaghan for B. Owens 17 min. in.; Shane King for B. McBride 35 min.; Ciaran Donnelly for R. Johnson 53 min.; S. McDermott for S. King 69 min.

Referee B. Murtagh (Longford).

## Key Moment

Ironically the key moment in this game happened six days earlier when Monaghan beat Fermanagh. While Donegal, who were the better team in the second match, had got over the trauma of being caught at the death with Mark O'Donnell's late goal, Fermanagh who had their sights set on an Ulster final appearance, were still reeling from the Monaghan setback.

In the end Mickey Moran's comment that Donegal would go further in the championship was vindicated.

## Quote of the Week

"Well you tell the truth, the only people that played for Fermanagh this evening was the St. Michael's Brass Band" - unnamed Fermanagh supporter leaving Brewster Park on Saturday evening.

## Donegal's path to victory

**16 sec:** Adrian Sweeney and Brian McLaughlin combine to send Michael Hegarty on his way. The Kilcar man carries the ball thirty yards before slotting it between the posts. (0-1) (0-0)

**9 min:** Brian Roper prevents and Adrian Sweeney effort from going wide he is fouled on the end line and Sweeney coolly converts the resultant free.

**11 min:** Brendan Devenney leaves Michael Lilly in his wake to add point number three. Adrian Sweeney and John Gildea getting the move underway. (0-3) to (0-0):

**12 min:** Brendan Devenney collects a quickly taken side line free from Damian Diver before releasing Brian Roper who splits the posts with his left boot. Donegal (0-4) Fermanagh (0-0)

**25 min:** Adrian Sweeney again finds the range from a close in free after Brian Roper was fouled. Donegal (0-5) Fermanagh (0-0)

**29 min:** Brian Roper adds his second point after a sweeping move out of defence. Donegal (0-6) Fermanagh (0-0):

**34 min:** With Donegal in total control Adrian Sweeney adds to the Fermanagh agony when he once more punishes the home defence. Donegal (0-7) Fermanagh (0-0):

**35 min:** Sweeney adds a second one minute later again from a close range free following a foul on Andrew Gallagher. Donegal (0-8) Fermanagh (0-0):

**39 min:** Brendan Devenney rounds off the half in perfect style when he converts a 30 metre free, after he was fouled himself.

**Half time** Donegal (0-9) Fermanagh (0-0):

**42 min:** Rory Gallagher finally gets Fermanagh out of the blocks when he points from the twenty metre line when he collects a long delivery into the danger area from wing forward Tom Brewster. Donegal (0-9) Fermanagh (0-1):

**43 min:** Brendan Devenney slots over after Paddy McGuinness penalised for a push in the back on Brian McLaughlin. Donegal (0-10) Fermanagh (0-1):

**45 min:** Rory Gallagher lands his sides second from a 45. Donegal (0-10) Fermanagh (0-2):

**50 min:** Brendan Devenney turns and teases his marker before landing a fantastic score from out wide 35 metres from goals. Donegal (0-11) Fermanagh (0-2):

**56 min:** Devenney who was really on fire all evening kicks the score of the game 0 from 40 metres to extinguish any notion of an Fermanagh comeback. Donegal (0-12) Fermanagh (0-2):

**57 min** Ciaran Donnelly who was dropped from the previous week and just in the game runs on to a quick free from Rory Gallagher to land a delightful point. Donegal (0-12) Fermanagh (0-3):

**60 min :** The Brewster brothers combine with Tom setting up Paul who raced through the Donegal defence before he added the Erne counties fourth point. Donegal (0-12) Fermanagh (0-4):

**63 min:** Brian McLaughlin finally gets his name on the score sheet when he splits the towns ends post to stretch the Tirconall lead out nine points. Donegal (0-13) Fermanagh (0-4):

**65 min:** Ciaran Donnelly bears down on goals before adding his second and his sides fifth. Donegal (0-13) Fermanagh (0-5):

**67 min :** Brendan Devenney chipped over a free after he himself was fouled. Donegal (0-14) Fermanagh (0-5):

**73 min.** Liam McBarron picks up a wayward clearance in the middle of the park and drives forward to land a good point from play.

**74 min:** Tony Boyle who was introduced a few minutes earlier for Andrew Gallagher drives over from long range to bring the curtain down on his sides scoring exploits for the evening.

**75 min.** As he had done twice this season so far Mark O'Donnell rattled the Donegal net for the third time. O'Donnell rounding Paddy Campbell before finding the target with his left boot.

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# A bridge too far for Donegal

Michael Daly reports from  
Newbridge

Photos: Thomas Gallagher

## Key Moments

There were three. (1): After 17 minutes Brendan Devenney cuts through but is fouled for a certain penalty. If he had fallen Niall Barrett would have awarded a penalty but Devenney to his credit got in his shot, Barrett allowing the play to continue and Christy Byrne made the save. Another Donegal goal (from a penalty) would surely have killed Kildare off.

(2): Martin Lynch's goal on 54 minutes was key to Kildare's eventual victory, that goal and subsequent Kildare points left Donegal with too much to do.

(3) In the end Donegal almost turned this game around but a late Ken Doyle point for Kildare wins the game.

Again Brendan Devenney was Donegal's outstanding player, looking capable at all times of out-running his man and he scored 1-5 for good measure. However, my vote goes to a Kildare man. A pain in the proverbial you know where, Johnny Doyle combined fluent free-taking with excellent general play. Niall Buckley, Martin Lynch and Tadhg Fennin also caught the eye, while Adrian Sweeney was another to impress for Donegal

**DONEGAL** .....1-16  
**KILDARE** .....1-17

This was an amazing, absorbing encounter. Perfect in so many facets but the final moments were gut wrenching for Donegal, a Kildare point in added time destroying Donegal's almost perfect day.

A massively entertaining game, it had a sickening finish - for Donegal. A real roller coaster ride, Kildare corner back Ken Doyle snatched victory with a late, late point.

Donegal started superbly, lost an eight point lead but stayed one point ahead at half time. Kildare edged clear mid way through the second half, Martin Lynch scoring a slick goal.

But, Donegal's response was a fighting one. Two minutes from the finish they had closed a four point gap and were level, 1-16 each when the indomitable Adrian Sweeney dipped his shoulder once more before flicking over an excellent point. Kildare, credit to them, responded with that match winning Doyle point, Donegal never making any serious further penetration to suggest another score.

Time and again, in key games, Donegal seem to get caught, losing by the narrowest of margins. But this time laying blame is churlish. Yes, there were 12 wides and other chances flapped at, but in this cauldron, Donegal's response was as manly as it was magnificent.

Donegal gave everything; outsiders by a long way, they thrilled a crowd of 14,000 mainly Kildare supporters.

Against the breeze Donegal tore into Kildare, silencing the home support as my man-of-the-match Brendan Devenney, Tony Boyle and Andrew Gallagher sliced through a bewildered defence.

However, Donegal's lightning pace could never be sustained, but while it lasted their early supremacy was a joy to behold, their confidence growing visibly in a first quarter where they missed more than they finished, ending the half with eight wides, some of them from very scoreable chances.

Veteran broadcaster Micheal O Muirheartaigh made the point that this was Donegal's fourth championship game and from those four games nothing to show, yet, in 1992 they played six times to win the all Ireland.

Little comfort then with this 'magnificent defeat' and little consolation for Donegal boss Mickey Moran in knowing his side had played their part in a classic.

"We're devastated, nothing short of it. We have had to work without key players due to suspensions and injuries but we played with total pride against one of the best sides around. We are gutted at losing but I felt very proud and I think Donegal football supporters should feel pride has been restored," the Derry man said after the game.

## O'DWYER RELIEVED

Kildare manager Mick O'Dwyer was relieved with

the final result but agreed that Donegal had given his side areal fright: "Donegal played a great sporting game of football. It was a classic and it was unfair that any team should lose today. They played the ball all the way, they are a class side and we will hear more from this Donegal team," he enthused.

He did suggest Donegal had erred in their early pace. "I thought no team could sustain the pace or level Donegal played at in the first 15 minutes. They came at us in a whirlwind, players were all over the place but if they had a fault or weakness it was that they didn't pace themselves," the wily O'Dwyer, who recently celebrated his 65th birthday, told the Democrat/People's Press after the game.

## CONFIDENT

After 12 minutes Andrew Gallagher, Tony Boyle and two Brendan Devenney frees had Donegal feeling confident, but when Devenney skipped past Brian Lacey before firing home a goal, Kildare were really rocked. Another Tony Boyle point put Donegal eight points ahead, 1-5 to no score but slowly, very slowly, Kildare crept back into the game.

Johnny Doyle from frees and play, Niall Buckley, Martin Lynch, Dermot Earley and Tadhg Fennin began to dominate their men. Damien Diver, John Gildea and Martin Coll, early stars for Donegal, drifted in general play, but they did get a second wind, Coll, however, lacking match fitness, was eventually replaced.

By half time Tony Blake had made two superb saves from Johnny Doyle and Martin Lynch, ominous in itself, as Kildare carved out real openings.

McCormick (two), Brennan(two) and Doyle (0-3, two frees), Lynch and Fennin points brought Kildare right back into contention by the break, Donegal leading 1-7 to 0-9, their points from Andrew Gallagher and John Gildea (Donegal's first score in a 15 minute spell dominated totally by Kildare).

## SECOND HALF

Despite steady scores from veterans Tony Boyle and Noel Hegarty, Donegal were struggling - even with the breeze - and Kildare were just a point behind when a hotly disputed Niall Buckley point on 47 minutes was followed by a crucial goal, Buckley floating the ball perfectly for Lynch to out-strip the thin defensive cover. Tony Blake, who had just made a third miraculous save, ran out of luck, the ball tucked neatly to the net by Lynch.

## MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

That score didn't finish Donegal but it gave them a mountain to climb. Kildare led by four points, 1-16 to 1-12 with ten minutes left when Donegal hit another purple patch, Devenney superb with two points, one from play, Adrian Sweeney hoisting a marvellous hand-free from 47 metres on the side-line and another from play to level matters at 1-16 each.

Glen Ryan, long introduced into the fray by a worried O'Dwyer, underlined Kildare's angst. But, it was corner back Ken Doyle, sent off against Meath, who inflicted the ultimate irony, stabbing over a winning point in added time.

# Ref justice in Newbridge

Blake was superb in goal, Doherty excellent at full back but fortunate not to get a red card for a swing out at the problematic Fenniñ. Centre back was always weak, Johnny Doyle and Martin Lynch had too much room, although Noel Hegarty, I felt, led the line well and gave his all. Devenney and Adrian Sweeney caused headaches but centrally Donegal were inconsistent, Coll, Hegarty and McLaughlin having mixed contributions, some great moments, some expensive lapses and errors also. John Gildea and Paul McGonigle stormed back into contention in the final 15 minutes, but both teams had their hare of dominance, Sweeney and Ryan, for up to 40 minutes holding sway at midfield.

However, they and their colleagues should feel pride has been restored, in such a high profile game it was good to see Donegal play the expansive football Mickey Moran and John Joe Doherty believe will become more evident as they re-shape a team with both promise and problems.

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Paddy Campbell, Eamon Doherty, Mark Crossan; Noel Hegarty 0-1, Martin Coll, Damien Diver; John Gildea 0-2, Paul McGonigle; Andrew Gallagher 0-2, Michael Hegarty, Adrian Sweeney 0-3; Tony Boyle 0-2, Brian McLaughlin 0-1, Brendan Devenney 1-5. Sub Barry Monaghan (55) for Coll; James Gallagher (68) for Boyle.

**Kildare:** Christy Byrne; Brian Lacey, Cormac Davey, Ken Doyle 0-1; Kenny Duane, Martin Ryan, Anthony Rainbow; Niall Buckley 0-2, Ronan Sweeney; Eddie McCormack 0-3, John Doyle 0-5, Dermot Earley; Padraig Brennan 0-3, Martin Lynch 1-1, Tadgh Fenniñ 0-2. Subs: Glen Ryan (56) for M. Ryan; Killian Brennan (62) for Sweeney; Paddy Murray (64) for P. Brennan.

**Referee:** Niall Barrett (Cork).

**“DONEGAL HAVE left the gate open,” Colm O’Rourke told R.T.E.’s Michael Lyster during the half-time analysis.**

And the problem with doing that, as it turned out, is that your opponents can nip around the side of the house and get in through the back door.

Assuming, of course, you don’t come up against a bouncer i.e. the man in black.

“If Kildare had lost, I would not like to have been the referee,” Colm ventured forty minutes later when match official Niall Bennett blew the final whistle.

Come again, Colm? Surely you meant Donegal could feel justly annoyed and the referee needn’t bother browsing over any brochures to plan a holiday up here?

Over on Highland Radio, Charlie Collins, Michael McGee and analyst, Martin McHugh would have laughed at the former Meath footballer’s assessment - if abject disappointment and disillusionment hadn’t got in the way of any merriment.

“Not just good enough,” Charlie blasted the man in the middle of a poor performance.

“He should put on the white jersey,” insisted Michael.

“Home town decisions...,” Martin backed up the general consensus.

A free count of 28 against 15 in Kildare’s favour - highlighted in R.T.E.’s stats display at the end - appeared indeed to leave Colm O’Rourke’s comment floundering in shallow water.

“The referee’s going to let a lot go here,” Michael McGee had predicted shortly after the start. Little did he know.

A rampant Donegal display in the opening quarter of an hour had Kildare sinking lower than an Eircom share.

“Paul McGonagle - they rate him their find of the season,” Ger Canning enthused about

the Donegal midfielder.

“Donegal seem to have an extra man everywhere,” Charlie tried to keep count on Highland.

Contributing largely to that opening blitz for Donegal was a vintage Tony Boyle prompting Michael to claim if he had been a soccer player he would be worth in the region of £65 million. “Ah, don’t exaggerate McGee...,” Charlie chuckled.

Even when Eddie McCormack - no relation to Highland’s sponsors for the game - opened the Kildare account, the Newbridge visitors still appeared in control. “And it’s John Gildea in oceans of space...,” Charlie focused on a player due to cross the spacious Atlantic one forty-eight hours after Saturday evening’s encounter for a stint in Boston.

“Should have been a penalty in my view...,” Charlie declared after Brendan Devenney was foiled (fouled) in sight of the Kildare target.

“Should have been a free...,” R.T.E.’s Ger on the same incident.

As Kildare picked off the points, the Highland team sensed danger. “Donegal are losing it at centre-field,” Michael warned.

After a second outstanding stop by Tony Blake in the closing stages of the first half, Kildare finally managed to grab the equalising score soon after the break. “And the teams are level for the very first time,” Ger told viewers - obviously ignoring, as many a commentator before him has done, that they had to have been level at the very start.

The big question now was, would they still be level at the finish or would we have extra-time? “These are two sides who really want to win,” Ger seemed to lay that particular question in limbo.

Then came the point of no return - or

rather the point that returned two completely different verdicts from the umpires stationed at either side of the Donegal uprights.

“This is ridiculous,” Charlie blazed after the “score” was eventually signalled.

“When in doubt, give it out,” Martin repeated the old sporting maxim.

“Michael, I don’t like this referee, I don’t like him,” a frustrated Charlie related to his co-commentator.

“.....and that one drops wide. Well, maybe they’ll give it cause the crowd’s got excited,” Charlie sneered with some justification as the Lilywhites came close again.

“There’s a lot in Donegal yet,” Ger reminded the watching hordes.

“There’s surely no way back for Donegal now,” said Charlie as Kildare raced into a four point lead.

But back came Mickey Moran’s men and hope grew in the Highland commentary box.

“Is it the equalizing score? It IS the equalizing score” Charlie let all Newbridge and his listeners know.

But referee Bennett was still playing more than a bit part in the proceedings. “He’s reading from the fish and chip menu and not the five star one,” Michael groaned. Almost on cue a Kildare player “made a meal”, according to Charlie, of a challenge.

But it was going to be a long journey home for Donegal after a late point from Kildare corner-back Ken Doyle salvaged victory for the home team.

“They can thank Mr. Barrett,” Charlie laid the blame at the dressing-room door of the match official.

“Maybe, Donegal feel they should have got a draw,” Colm O’Rourke declared wearing, however, a facial expression that didn’t appear to agree.

## Quote

“Donegal played their part in a classic, but, sure I suppose that’s not much consolation to them, I know it wouldn’t do me much good either,” Kildare manager Mick O’Dwyer praising Donegal but realising nice sentiments don’t get you very far in championship football.



## Allianz National Football League



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

**With a sparking display of football in the difficult conditions, Donegal got their reign under new manager Mickey Moran off to a good start with a well merited victory over Offaly at MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey on Sunday.**

Conditions for the players were difficult in the extreme with very heavy rain for the 24 hours preceding making the pitch very heavy with some surface water. Underneath, however, the surface was reasonably solid and the players made light of the conditions to serve up some very good football for the 2,000 spectators huddled together in the stand.

For many of those present, nearly all from Donegal, expectations were not very high that this Donegal team could make a winning start. They must have been mildly surprised by the opening quarter when Donegal had close to 90% of the possession and ran at the Offaly defence as if they were playing in a championship game.

It must also be said that their opponents on Sunday were far from full strength and indeed at times Offaly looked an average side with only a handful of their players playing up to what you would expect from a team who are there or thereabouts in the Leinster Championship.

Donegal could easily have wrapped the game up in that period with a number of goal chances along with a missed penalty. However, they did build up a lead which they never looked like relinquishing.

Fielding four new players making their debut - Stephen Cassidy, Michael Doherty and Barry Monaghan being joined by Michael's brother, Eamon as a late replacement for the injured Shane Carr - Donegal dominated the midfield exchanges thanks to some excellent work by John Gildea and the ability of Michael Hegarty to win many of the breaks.

Wing half-backs Noel Hegarty and captain Damien Diver were pushing forward at every occasion and even Eamon Doherty found himself in new territory following roving corner-forward Basil Malone.

The debutantes can all be pleased with their contributions with Michael Doherty getting Donegal's opening score and Cassidy and Monaghan also getting on the scoresheet. Cassidy was pitted against the best player on the field All-Star corner back, Cathal Daly and he gave the Offaly man a busy afternoon.

Apart from the hunger shown by the newcomers, the 'older' hands were also prepared to work hard for the team with Noel McGinley excellent in defence along with Raymond Sweeney in his new position at centre-back, while up front James Gallagher worked harder than he ever did and Adrian Sweeney and Johnny McCafferty were thorns in the last line of the Offaly defence.

### GREAT START

Donegal were on the scoreboard after three and a half minutes when a poor clearance gifted Michael Doherty the opening score. They could have been much further ahead two minutes later when a 70m run by Gildea ended with Stephen Cassidy being fouled in the 'square' but Adrian Sweeney's penalty was tipped onto a post and out for a '45' by Offaly 'keeper, Pdraig Kelly. Four minutes later Johnny McCafferty and Barry

**Peter Campbell reports from MacCumhaill Park**

**Photos by Conor McGonagle**

Monaghan created a good opening for Adrian Sweeney but he pulled his shot wide of a gaping goal. A foul on Michael Hegarty gave James Gallagher the chance to add Donegal's second point, and the goal that had eluded them arrived in the 12th minute somewhat fortuitously. An effort for a point by Stephen Cassidy was fumbled by Kelly in the Offaly goal and Johnny McCafferty was in sharply to slide the ball through Kelly's legs and into the net.

James Gallagher increased the lead from a free in the 14th minute, again for a foul on Michael Hegarty, and Gallagher made it 1-4 to no score when converting another free after a foul on Raymond Sweeney.

After being totally dominated for the opening twenty minutes, Offaly came to life with a point from Mel Keenaghan, one of their more positive players on the day.

They almost struck for a goal in the 22nd minute when Donie Ryan broke clear and fired low from about 25m but the ball went just over the crossbar. Mel Keenaghan reduced the leeway to four points with another good point but Donegal hit back with Stephen Cassidy flicking, soccer style, a Noel Hegarty through ball on to Adrian Sweeney for a good score.

Offaly hit back with Cathal Daly and Mel Keenaghan setting up Ciaran McManus for a point in the 29th minute and two minutes later they should have had a goal when a fantastic ball from McManus found Colm Quinn free in front of the Donegal goal. However, Quinn fumbled the exquisite pass and Donegal 'keeper, Tony Blake was able to clear.

Before the break the sides exchanged points with Barry Monaghan finishing an excellent Donegal move and Colm Quinn pointing a free from 45m at the other end.

Half-time: Donegal 1-6, Offaly 0-5.

Donegal started the second half as they had done the first with Stephen Cassidy finding the range and they almost had a goal opening minutes later when a Gallagher free dropped for the intruding Michael Hegarty but he failed to make contact.

Offaly had their best spell in the next ten minutes and cut the deficit to two points by the 50th minute with points from Colm Quinn (free), Basil Malone (free) and a fisted point from James Grennan.

Donegal restored their four point advantage with points from Adrian Sweeney pointing a free and Johnny McCafferty getting a wonderful point from near the sideline.

Cillian Farrell had an Offaly score but James Gallagher and Adrian Sweeney from frees extended Donegal's lead into the comfort zone again with five minutes left.

Offaly's only reply came from a pointed Basil Malone free in the 67th minute although three minutes into added time Ciaran McManus tested Tony Blake in the Donegal goal with a good low shot which the Donegal man kept out with his foot.

Donegal have to be pleased not alone with the result, but with the way the team performed in the difficult conditions. At times their short passing was, perhaps, a little dangerous but manager, Moran, speaking afterwards said that they would be working on that aspect of their game.

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Eamonn Doherty, Mark Crossan, Noel McGinley; Noel Hegarty, Raymond Sweeney, Damien Diver; John Gildea, Barry Monaghan (0-1); James Gallagher (0-4), Michael Hegarty, Michael Doherty (0-1); Johnny McCafferty (1-1), Adrian Sweeney (0-3), Stephen Cassidy (0-1). Subs., Jonathan Scanlon for Crossan;

Martin Caulfield for Cassidy; Cathal Brennan for Monaghan; Tony Boyle for Michael Doherty.

**Offaly:** Pdraig Kelly; Cathal Daly, Ger Rafferty, James Brady; Barry Mooney, John Kenny, Karl Slattery; James Grennan (0-1), Ciaran McManus (0-1); Donie Ryan (0-1), Neville Coughlan, Emmet Molloy; Colm Quinn (0-2), Mel Keenaghan (0-2), Basil Malone (0-2). Sub., Cillian Farrell (0-1) for Molloy.

**Referee:** Martin Brady (Cavan).

**Note:** On such a cold day and with visiting press representatives, the usual half-time cuppa would have been very welcome at MacCumhaill Park. The newspaper media, in particular, have very poor facilities at the venue at present. But with plans underway for new facilities, their discomfort could have appeased by a warming half-time cuppa.

### Big Match Stats

#### Donegal

	1st half	2nd half	Total
Goals	1	0	1
Points	6	5	11
Wides	4	2	6
Frees For	13	11	24
Frees Against	13	13	26
45's	1	1	2
Yellow Cards	0	1	1
Red Cards	0	0	0

#### Offaly

	1st half	2nd half	Total
Goals	0	0	0
Points	5	5	10
Wides	3	3	6
Frees For	13	13	26
Frees Against	13	11	24
45's	0	0	0
Yellow Cards	1	1	2
Red Cards	0	0	0

# Donegal denied win in injury time

Donegal ..... 0-12  
Galway ..... 0-12

**Three late Galway points, two of them in injury time denied spirited Donegal full points in this pulsating national league tie in Tuam Stadium on Sunday afternoon.**

Having played the better football for well over three quarters of the contest, Donegal were very unlucky not to have returned home with a win under their belts and the two precious league points in the bag.

Instead, Galway who fielded eight of their All Ireland side, somehow held their nerve and composure to salvage a last gasp draw.

**Tom Comack reports from Tuam**  
**Photos: Conor McGonagle**

In fact, the Tribesmen seemed resigned to defeat when in one last desperate bid for victory, ace forward, Padraigh Joyce, blasted wide of Tony Blake's left hand upright.

However, refusing to panic, and with the referee, much to the annoyance of the Donegal following in the 3,000 crowd playing on, Joyce atoned for the miss one minute later, when he split the posts from a close range free. Joyce was again at the centre of the sweeping move that set Kenny Naughton up for the equaliser with literally the last kick of the game, to send the home fans, (those who had not already gone home) into ecstasv.

Yet, despite the late setback, new look Donegal who had a number of opportunities to post the insurance point, emerged with a share of the spoils, and a much enhanced reputation.

With team captain, Damian Diver, sidelined from midweek, and corner forward Stephen Cassidy a late withdrawal due to a shoulder injury, most Donegal supporters would have been quite happy with a draw before the throw in.

## First blood

While Johnny McCafferty drew first blood for Donegal inside two minutes it was the Corribiders, playing with the aid of a strong breeze, who looked the more cohesive unit in the opening quarter. And with Joe Bergin in control at midfield the Connacht champions laid siege on the Donegal goals. In the early exchanges the Donegal defence looked a little ragged, and but for the tenacity of corner back, Noel McGinley, the game as a contest could have been over as early as the end of the first quarter. Twice the Naomh Columba man came to his side's rescue as he denied rampant Galway, what looked like certain goals.

Save number one came on thirteen minutes with the teams locked on 0-2 each, McGinley diving bravely on the boot of Sean Og De Paor to deny the wingback a great chance of a three pointer. Four minutes later he stepped into the breach once more, as Derek Savage was about to pull the trigger on an even much more clear cut chance than that of his team mate.

And while two John Donnellan points edged the Connacht champions into the lead, the visitors recovered to finish the half with a flourish, and go in at the break albeit, a little fortunately, 0-5 to 0-4 in front. Adrian Sweeney who awoke from his early slumber kicked two of those late first half points, Michael Hegarty added the third.

While Kenny Naughton momentarily tied up the game in the early minutes of the second half, it was Donegal who exerted most of the prressure in the second half.

Realising that they were not going to compete with big Joe Bergin in the aerial exchanges John Gildea and Barry Monaghan began to break the ball in the midfield sector with great effect.

And with James Gallagher and Michael Hegarty coming deep to win possession the pendulum began to swing Donegal's way.

James Gallagher was rewarded for his industry with a great point to restore the Donegal advantage.

By the midway stage in the half that advantage was out to two points as Andrew Gallagher(2) and Adrian Sweeney (1) found the range as John Donnellan and Sean Og De Paor kept the home side in touch.

With the scent of victory in the air, Donegal began to play with renewed confidence as Noel Hegarty John Gildea, Barry Monaghan , James Gallagher and Michael Hegarty swept forward at every opportunity.

## Injury time

Three times in the closing twenty minutes John McCafferty found the range to give his side a three point cushion only to see Padraig Joyce twice, and John Donnellan once, reduce the margin to to two.

The margin was still two as the clock ticked into injury time when Joyce blasted wide in a crowded goalmouth. The fullforward atoned somewhat one minute into injury time when he split the posts from a close in free, before Kenny Naughton's sensationally landed the equaliser two and half minutes into added time.

**Donegal:** Tony Blake (St Eunan's); Eamonn Doherty (Ardara), Mark Crossan (St. Eunan's), Noel McGinley(Naomh Columba); Noel Hegarty,(Naomh Columba) Raymond Sweeney,(Dungloe) Jonathan Scanlon(St. Eunan's); John Gildea (Naomh Conall), Barry Monaghan (0-1);(Four Master's) James Gallagher (Gweedore) (0-1) , Michael Hegarty (Kilcar) (0-1) , Michael Doherty (Ardara) ; Johnny McCafferty (Termon)(0-4), Adrian Sweeney(Dungloe) (0-3), Andrew Gallagher (St. Naul's) (0-2); Subs: Brian Roper (Aodh Ruadh)for M. Doherty 46 min.;

**Galway:** Padraig Lally; Tomas Meehan, Ritchie Fahy, Ciaran Collins; Michael Colleran, Tommy Joyce, Sean Og De Paor (0-1); Joe Bergin, Fergal Gavin; Kenny Naughton(0-2), Lorcan Colleran, Noel Meehan; Derek Savage, Padraig Joyce (0-4,2F) John Donnellan(0-5,3F); Subs: Gerry O'Brien for N. Meehan half-time; Tommy Carton for F. Gavin 47 min.;

**Referee:** Peadar Reilly (Longford):

# The Marksman

**Tony Blake:** Tony had a very quiet afternoon and with the exception of one poor kickout that went unpunished, his kicking was of the usual very high standard. 7

**Emonn Doherty:** Found John Donnellan a real handful, came more into the game when Donnellan was moved to full-forward. 6

**Mark Crossan:** Contained dangerman Padraig Joyce well in the first half, but found John Donnellan a more difficult proposition when he moved to fullforward. 7

**Noel McGinley:** Simply brilliant! Tenacious in the tackle throughout, Derek Savage will be seeing the Glenman in his sleep for months. His two first half diving saves on Sean Og DePaor and Savage were without question a turning point in the game. He also drove forward with great purpose on a number of occasions in the second half. 9

**Noel Hegarty.** As a defender, any day your opponent is substituted has to be a good day. But on a day when two of your of your opponents are called ashore has to be mission accomplished. (Both of Noel's direct opponents Noel Meehan and Fergal Gavan were replaced) 7

**Raymond Sweeney:** Doubtful all week with a shoulder injury, started well then faded for a while but produced a good solid second half display. 6

**Jonathan Scanlon:** Struggled for pace when pulled out of position in the first half, came more into the game in the second and went forward on a number of occasions to set up a number of scores. 6

**John Gildea:** Not as prominent as against Offaly, once he started to break ball with Joe Bergin, he broke the Galway man's stranglehold on the sector. Had a very good twenty minute spell in the middle of the second half. 7

**Barry Monaghan:** Very involved throughout the game, went forward and clipped over an excellent point in the first

half. He won his fair share of possession in midfield an improved performance from the Offaly game. 7

**James Gallagher:** Worked tirelessly throughout, at his best when winning ball in the middle of the field and driving it forward quickly to the inside men. Kicked a fine point but was involved in at least four more. 8

**Michael Hegarty:** His best game to date at senior level for the county. Like James Gallagher he foraged far and wide for possession, and was provider of good quality ball to the full forward line. Indeed, but for some wayward shooting he could have ended game with more than a point for his endeavours. 8

**Michael Doherty:** Not as conspicuous in attack as the rest of the forward unit. But did work back in the first half and helped out his defence on a number of occasions. Replaced by Brian Roper eleven minutes into second half. 5

**Johnny McCafferty:** Despite the best efforts of his markers Tomas Meehan and Ritchie Fahy there was another spellbinding performance from the Termon man, who scored four super points. In just two games he has made the number thirteen shirt his own. 9

**Adrian Sweeney:** After a slow start sprang to life in the closing minutes of the first half to clip over two points in rapid succession, added two more in the second half. Proving a great target man on the edge of the square. 8

**Andrew Gallagher:** A late replacement for Stephen Cassidy showed no debut day nerves to grab the opportunity with both hands. Also got in on the scoring act, posting two second half points. 7

**Brian Roper:** Out with injury for the past four to five weeks the Aodh Ruadh man showed he was a little ring rusty when he was introduced into the action eleven minutes into the second half. 5

## Match Stats

### Donegal

	1st. Half	2nd. Half	Total
Goals	0	0	0
Points	5	7	12
Wides	5	7	12
Frees For	13	8	21
Frees Against	10	10	20
45's	0	0	0
Yellow Cards	1	1	2
Red Cards	0	0	0

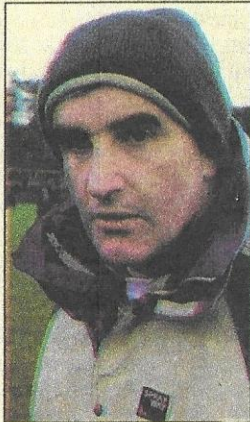
### Galway

	1st. Half	2nd. Half	Total
Goals	0	0	0
Points	4	8	12
Wides	8	8	16
Frees For	10	10	20
Frees Against	13	8	21
45's	0	2	2
Yellow Cards	0	0	0
Red Cards	0	0	0

## After match reaction

### Donegal manger Mickey Moran

"I am disappointed that we let a three point lead slip away, especially as we had at least four chances to get the insurance point. However, I am delighted with the way we played and with the spirit and commitment the boys showed in the game."



# Sweeney brace does the trick as . . . .

**Donegal** ..... 2-14  
**Louth** ..... 1-10

**A brace of goals from Adrian Sweeney in the 7th and 8th minutes put Donegal on their way to an impressive victory in their final game before the Christmas break against Louth in Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon on Sunday.**

**Peter Campbell reports from Fr. Tierney Park**

**Photos by Thomas Gallagher**

The game was switched to the Ballyshannon venue late on Saturday evening after an inspection found that MacCumhail Park was unplayable.

The switch did nothing to dampen the new-found spirit among the Donegal county team and apart from relaxing when in a commanding position in the second quarter, the team were never really threatened.

That refreshing approach was reflected by one of the elder statesmen of the team, John Gildea, when he said, after the game: "The spirit in the camp is the best I have seen and it is also the most enjoyable," said Gildea, who added that they had really did no hard training, but he was looking forward to getting down to business after Christmas.

This new-found togetherness had made Donegal into a unit who, while a long way from the finished article, are giving their followers plenty to talk about. On Sunday they hit all but one point of their tally from play and added to their twelve points from play in Tuam, it was little wonder that manager, Moran, was high in his praise of his front men.

At present the county are carrying a very big panel of players with at least fourteen subs toggled on Sunday as well as a number of injury victims enjoying endless cups of tea while watching from the pressroom.

With hopes for the return of a number of exiles as well as Jim McGuinness, Paddy Campbell and Brendan Devenney, the task of assembling a championship squad, while more difficult, will be something that will be relished by the management.

Sunday's game saw Donegal profit greatly from using the long ball early on with John Gildea providing Adrian Sweeney with the supply from which he roasted the Louth full-back.

Louth came to Ballyshannon in an aggressive mood and when they were hit by Donegal's whirlwind start, they found it difficult to cope with. They lost their freetaker, Mark Stanfield to two yellow cards after eighteen minutes and were fortunate to have fourteen men starting the second half as Seamus O'Hanlon escaped with a yellow card after a couple of incidents at the end of the first half.

Twenty minutes into the second half they were reduced to thirteen men when Stephen Melia was red carded for a crude

tackle on John Gildea, while Donegal's Johnny McCafferty also found himself the recipient of an early shower for lashing out after winning a free with ten minutes left. In our report of the game in Tuam, McCafferty sailed close to the wind by twice kicking the ball away after decisions going against him and his red card looks like to deprive him of two of the remaining four games in the competition.

## Long ball

After going a point behind after one minute to a Mark Stanfield point, there was a lengthy stoppage as Barry Monaghan was treated for an injury which eventually forced him to retire after ten minutes.

Before that, though, Donegal had taken a commanding 2-1 to 0-2 lead. John 'long ball' Gildea twice fired glorious 60 yard passes to the waiting Adrian Sweeney, who judged them to perfection and blast past Colm Nally in the Louth goal, one with his left and the second with his right.

Mark Stanfield replied with a free before Andrew Gallagher twice found the range and Brian Roper pointed to push Donegal 2-3 to 0-2 clear by the 15th minute.

Christy Grimes pointed a free for Louth but their discipline problems surfaced in the 18th minute when Mark Stanfield was shown a second yellow card.

James Gallagher found the range for Donegal before Christy Grimes pointed two frees to reduce the margin to five points. Donegal restored their two goal margin with the move of the match, started by Raymond Sweeney and finished with Johnny McCafferty fisting over the bar.

Some frailties in the Donegal defence were exposed in the 26th minute when a long ball was not cleared and Seamus O'Hanlon nipped in to find the Donegal net.

Donegal's response was good with Brian Roper putting Noel McGinley through to point and just before the break James Gallagher availed of another long delivery from John Gildea to leave the half-time score: Donegal 2-7, Louth 1-6.

Just before the end of the half tempers became frayed both on and off the field with Louth manager, Paddy Clarke becoming very agitated, while on the field Seamus O'Hanlon was lucky to escape with a yellow card. The protests continued as referee, Paul McCann, left the field, thanks mainly to the irate Clarke (who must have been lucky to have seen the second half from the touchline).

Donegal brought in Kevin Winston for Raymond Sweeney at half-time and switched Michael Hegarty back to the 'free' role. Hegarty responded by pushing Donegal five points clear but David O'Reilly cancelled that score at the other end.

James Gallagher with his left boot and Adrian Sweeney from Donegal's only pointable free eased Donegal six clear and Sweeney added to that with a superb point from 40m.

Martin Farrelly pointed for Louth, but debut boy, Peter McGonigle made a superb surge to point at the other end. Louth sub. Cathal O'Hanlon brought the margin back to six points, but then they had defender, Stephen Melia red carded for a 'tackle' on John Gildea, which really took the wind

out of their sails.

Adrian Sweeney increased Donegal's advantage before Johnny McCafferty showed inexperience in retaliating after being fouled. In the final minutes Cathal O'Hanlon and James Gallagher traded points as Donegal ran out easy winners.

Before the end Seamus Friel of Fanad became Donegal's third debut player on the day. Apart from man of the match, Adrian Sweeney, Donegal had excellent performances from John Gildea, Damien Diver, the ever-improving Eamon Doherty, James Gallagher and Andrew Gallagher.

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Eamon Doherty, Mark Crossan, Noel McGinley 0-1; Jonathon Scanlon, Raymond Sweeney, Damien Diver, John Gildea, Barry Monaghan; Brian Roper 0-1, Michael Hegarty 0-1, James Gallagher 0-4; Andrew Gallagher 0-2, Adrian Sweeney 2-3, 1 free, Johnny McCafferty 0-1. Subs: Paul McGonagle 0-1 for Monaghan (injd. 13 mins); Shane Carr for Scanlon (33); Kevin Winston for R. Sweeney (half time); Seamus Friel for Roper (injd. 56).

**Louth:** Colm Nally; John Neary, Denis Reilly, Peter McGinness; Aaron Hoey, Stephen Melia, Simon Gerard; Ken Reilly, Martin Farrelly 0-1; Christy Grimes 0-4, 3 fs; Seamus O'Hanlon 1-0, Mark Stanfield 0-2, frees; David Reilly 0-1, Aidan O'Neill, J.P. Rooney. Cathal O'Hanlon (0-2, 1 free) for Grimes (42); Brendan Reilly for Rooney (50); Colin Quinn for O'Neill (63).

**Referee:** Paul McCann (Westmeath).

• A minute's silence was observed prior to the match as a mark of respect to the late Frank Hegarty, father of Noel Hegarty, who died at the weekend. Noel was originally selected on the team but was then replaced by Jonathan Scanlon.

## MATCH FACTS

### FIRST HALF

	Gls	Pts	Frees	Wides	45s
Donegal	2	7	9	1	0
Louth	1	6	17	3	0

### SECOND HALF

Donegal	0	7	16	4	1
Louth	0	4	12	5	1

### TOTALS

Donegal	2	14	25	5	1
Louth	1	10	29	8	1

# Fitter Tyrone deserve victory



REPORT BY  
**PETER CAMPBELL**

PHOTOS BY  
**OLIVER McVEIGH**

the other end the threat of Canavan was again to the fore as he got his hands to a Sean Teague cross but his palmed effort was easily saved by Tyrone Blake.

## GREAT BREAK

Tyrone were back in front by the 23rd minute thanks to points from Eoin Gormley and half-back Declan McCrossan, who made a great break from defence. James Gallagher missed a free from around 35 metres but he made amends later when a Gildea foul was moved in for dissent.

Peter Canavan put Tyrone ahead again in the 29th minute after receiving an inch perfect pass a covering role at times, but they always had difficulty with Canavan inside.

## MIDFIELD

Donegal did reasonably well at midfield where Barry Monaghan had his most impressive outing to date, winning and using the ball very well, while John Gildea made a number of notable catches. Up front Donegal struggled to make a worthwhile impression where Andrew Gallagher, despite taking some over-physical abuse from the Tyrone defence, was best. Adrian Sweeney in patches also looked threatening, while James Gallagher's workrate was commendable.

Perhaps the area where they were in trouble most was their inability to win the breaking ball from Gerard Cavlan, but Donegal hit back with one of the best moves involving John Gildea, Shane Carr, Gildea again before James Gallagher popped up to point.

However, as two minutes of injury time had elapsed Gerard Cavlan found the range from fully 50m and a minute later Stephen O'Neill released their other half-back, Ryan McMenamin to fire over their seventh point.

Half-time: Tyrone 0-7, Donegal 0-5.

After a long stay in the dressing-room, Donegal found themselves three points in arrears early in the second half, Stephen O'Neill converting a free after Eoin Gormley was fouled. The point came from a Donegal mistake, and it could easily have been a goal as Gormley broke clear.

However, by the 41st minute Donegal were back on terms with points from Brendan Devenney (after good work by Michael Doherty), Adrian Sweeney with a wonderful score with his left boot from near the sideline and and Andrew Gallagher, with help from Damien Diver and Michael Doherty.

## TURNING POINT

A turning point of the game came minutes later when Andrew Gallagher was fouled by two players in front of the Tyrone posts as he was almost through. However, the referee, John Bannon saw the incident differently and awarded a free against Gallagher for overcarrying. Tyrone broke upfield for Peter Canavan to point a free, while Gallagher required medical

attention for a split lip at the other end of the field.

By the 49th minute the home side had opened up a three point gap with points from Gerard Cavlan and Eoin Mulligan, Canavan playing a part in both scores. Indeed my notes show that Canavan had a hand in nine of Tyrone's thirteen scores which underlines the threat he posed.

Adrian Sweeney pulled a point back from a free, but that was as close as they were to get. Stephen O'Neill pointed a free for a foul on Canavan in the 54th minute and after a twelve minute period without a score, sub. Damien Gormley increased the margin to 0-13 to 0-9.

Donegal had sent in both Stephen Cassidy and Kevin Winston to the forward line and Raymond Sweeney in defence, but they were finding it difficult to get a clear sight at the Tyrone goal.

In the final minutes Donegal tried to get through for the match-saving scores. Andrew Gallagher almost found the range with a left-footed effort, while Adrian Sweeney converted a free won by Tony Boyle, now operating at full-forward. Even in injury time Barry Monaghan almost created an opening as he got in around the back of the Tyrone defence and almost got Andrew Gallagher in on goal, but he was not able to collect the final pass.

The fact that Donegal kept going to the final minutes was something that pleased manager, Mickey Moran, and they did have a couple of half-chances. However, at that stage Tyrone were funnelling back in defence and Donegal didn't have enough players with the energy to make any real breakthrough.

Tyrone's young side harried and chased down ever ball for the full game with corner-back Michael McGee, Declan McCrossan, Stephen O'Neill, Pascal Canavan, Eoin Gormley and Gerard Cavlan playing very well. However, without the threat posed by Peter Canavan, I think Donegal would have been able to deal with them.

**Tyrone:** Finbar McConnell; Michael McGee, Chris Lawn, Ciaran Gourley; Ryan McMenamin (0-1), Sean Teague, Declan McCrossan (0-1); Pascal Canavan, Cormac McAnallen; Brian Dooher, Stephen O'Neill (0-2, frees), Gerard Cavlan (0-2); Eoin Mulligan (0-1), Eoin Gormley (0-2), Peter Canavan (0-3, one free). Subs., Kevin Hughes for Dooher (49 mins.); Damien Gormley (0-1) for Cavlan (54 mins.)

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Patrick McConigley, Mark Crossan, Noel McGinley, Eamon Doherty, Shane Carr, Damien Diver; John Gildea, Barry Monaghan; Michael Doherty (0-1), Tony Boyle, James Gallagher (0-2, one free); Andrew Gallagher (0-1), Adrian Sweeney (0-5, four frees), Brendan Devenney. Subs., Stephen Cassidy for M. Doherty (52 mins.), Raymond Sweeney for E. Doherty, Kevin Winston for B. Devenney (both 54 mins.); Paul McGonigle for Gildea (66 mins.)

**Referee:** John Bannon (Longford).

**TYRONE** ..... 0-13  
**DONEGAL** ..... 0-10

A fitter Tyrone came out ahead in this top of the table league clash at Omagh on Sunday, thanks to another fine performance from Peter Canavan.

The Errigal Ciaran forward, like he has in the past, proved the main difference between the teams as he twisted and tormented from start to finish.

A crossfield wind made football difficult, and the 5,000 attendance were treated to a close rather than entertaining contest. Tyrone always looked a step in front of Donegal and their doggedness and smothering of players in possession was rewarded by Longford referee, John Bannon, who frustrated Donegal on a number of occasions.

Donegal tried all they could to stop the Tyrone juggernaut and to their credit they stayed in touch throughout, despite only holding the lead on one occasion midway through the first half.

With Canavan on top of his game, the Donegal defence were on the back foot from the start. The decision to start debutante Patrick McConigley on Canavan, was a little unfair on the Fanad lad. When he was moved in a switch with Noel McGinley, McConigley came into his own and apart from a misplaced pass when breaking from defence in the second half, he did not look out of place. Donegal brought Michael Doherty to play

around the middle of the field. Because of this they were on the back foot for most of the match, especially in the first half when both Tyrone wing half-backs got on the scoresheet.


Despite battling well for much of the first half against the strong breeze, they were in a very good position as the game entered first half injury time. However, they were hit twice in the four and a half minutes added on for stoppages for Tyrone to take a two point lead to the dressing room.

Tyrone were very quick out of the blocks with Peter Canavan scoring and making a point for Eoin Gormley inside six minutes.

Donegal were back on terms after twelve minutes thanks to an Adrian Sweeney free and then the Dungloe man won possession and set up Michael Doherty to point.

At this stage Sweeney looked to have the beating of Chris Lawn and a nudge by Lawn went unpunished as Sweeney was almost through for a goal, slipping at the vital moment.

A great block by Barry Monaghan saw Eamon Doherty crudely fouled in the 16th minute which necessitated some assistance before he was able to resume. From the free Adrian Sweeney put Donegal ahead for the only time of the game. At

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Leagues

## Match Facts

## FIRST HALF

	Goals	Pts.	Frees	Wides
Tyrone	0	7	8	9
Donegal	0	5	13	3

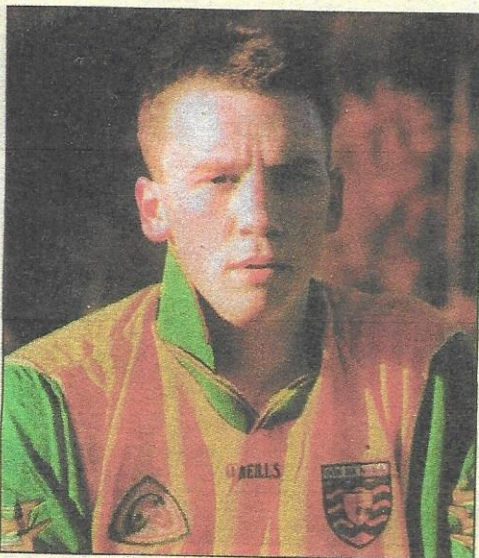
## SECOND HALF

Tyrone	0	6	19	2
Donegal	0	5	12	4

## TOTALS

Tyrone	0	13	27	11
Donegal	0	10	25	7

Six players were booked - Damien Diver, Tony Boyle and James Gallagher for Donegal; Chris Lawn, Michael McGee and Sean Teague for Tyrone.



Andrew Gallagher, Donegal's Man of the Match. (13-2-01. SM300)

## The vital moment

Early in the second half, Donegal's most dangerous forward, Andrew Gallagher, was fouled not once, but twice and a free is given against him. With scores level, Tyrone break downfield and edge into a lead they were never to relinquish.

## Donegal Player Ratings

**Tony Blake:** Had just one save to make and did so with ease. Kick-outs excellent.

Rating: 8.

**Patrick McConigley:** Difficult debut against Peter Canavan, but did well when switched. Got involved and made just one mistake.

Rating: 7.

**Mark Crossan:** Was dragged from in front of goal by Gormley to make room inside. Lost possession a couple of times.

Rating: 5.

**Noel McGinley:** The other defender to be given the Canavan job. Did well, especially in the second half.

Rating: 7.

**Eamon Doherty:** Was involved often in the first half, but shipped a very heavy challenge when winning a free deep in the Tyrone defence. Was quieter thereafter.

Rating: 5.

**Shane Carr:** Had a difficult time early on against O'Neill. Came into the game afterwards and his opponent did not score from play.

Rating: 6.

**Damien Diver:** Did his best to lift Donegal at various times and linked well between defence and attack.

Rating: 7.

**John Gilda:** Made some good catches and a couple of good runs. Was replaced near the end.

Rating: 6.

**Barry Monaghan:** His best display to date at midfield and was involved more than usual, a block in the first half sticks in the memory.

Rating: 7.

**Michael Doherty:** Replaced A.N. Other and got on the scoresheet. However, he was required in defence on a few occasions.

Rating: 6.

**Tony Boyle:** Used his craft to great effect, finding space. Needed to let the ball on a little quicker and his lack of pace allowed his opposite do some attacking.

Rating: 6.

**James Gallagher:** Tried manfully all through but also found the going tough against a typically dour Tyrone defence.

Rating: 6.

**Andrew Gallagher:** Gets the top mark for his efforts despite being the one which suffered most from the Tyrone defence. Always a threat.

Rating: 8.

**Adrian Sweeney:** Five points, four from frees, and a memorable one from play. Another couple just off the mark.

Rating: 7.

**Brendan Devenney:** Found the close-marking difficult; was beaten to the ball on a couple of occasions and never caused much of a threat.

Rating: 5.

Subs., Stephen Cassidy, Raymond Sweeney, Kevin Winston and Paul McGonigle - not on long enough for a proper assessment.

"Noel had a groin injury two years ago and still gives him bother. The place we were training was terrible. We have now changed. Noel trained at home on firmer ground and he's only back this last two weeks," said Moran.

"At the end of the day you have to be fair to everybody," said Moran. "If you don't set those standards you're going nowhere. At the end of the day of my tenure here I'll be able to walk out, like I did in Sligo and Derry, and say I was honest and straight down the line," said Mickey.

## Manager's Reaction

## 'Happy with spirit shown'

- Moran

Donegal manager, Mickey Moran, although not pleased with the result, felt his side played to the final whistle.

"Disappointing performance. The boys are disappointed with the result but more with the performance. We just showed in glimpses the type of football we can play.

"But at the end of the day I'm quite happy with the last five or six minutes. I thought we were going to fold with our fitness and Tyrone would take over, but we actually stayed with them and we had a couple of half-chances. Overall the better team won on the day and they fought for it more.

"They were up for it and possibly they had a wee edge overall on fitness which showed at times. I thought we grouped well and doggedly fought on. At the end of the day there was only a kick of a ball between the sides and we have to be happy with that because most people thought we would have been overrun," said Moran.

Regarding the role of Patrick McConigley on Peter Canavan, Moran said: "It was a tough task for young Patrick but Peter didn't get inside for a goal chance. I thought the area we broke down on was further out the pitch was the breaking ball. Once you won that ball you have the platform to feed the forward line good ball and we only did that in patches.

"But give the lads credit, we came back well in the second half and equalised from three points down. I thought John Bannon not giving a free for a foul on Andrew Gallagher was crucial. He had a cut lip and the free was pointable. They went down the field and Peter (Canavan) was touched and they got a free. That was a point and they got another free after that which meant the two points we gave away at half-time were back on the board," said Moran, who felt that Noel McGinley did very well on Canavan in the second half. He also felt that McConigley did well for a nineteen-year-old in his first game.

"We're five weeks at it and we're not sharp enough yet. Tyrone wanted it more than us. We have to take heart from it. There was only three points in it at the end of the day. Tyrone stuffed Kerry and beat Dublin and Roscommon, but they didn't stuff us," said Moran, who felt that the wind dropped in the second half.

"It's not the end of the world. It's a game; we were beaten. I'm disappointed we didn't perform they way we could. It's a stepping stone and we'll regroup.

"I said I would learn more from these three matches than we did prior to Christmas."

## Jim McGuinness

Because of some reports in the national press which gave a different picture, the Donegal manager said he wanted to put the record straight on Jim McGuinness: "Jim trains with the Poly (Jordanstown) and he's captain and I told him and Johnny (McCafferty) to train with the Poly midweek. I asked him to be available for Saturday or Sunday. Early on he was injured and he made three sessions with us.

"He was injured playing for the Poly on the day before the Cavan challenge and rang to say he wouldn't be there," said Moran, who said that he has been in contact with Adrian McGuckin and the player and they have agreed that he wasn't ready for a return yet. Moran said he had talked it over with Jim and he said that Noel Hegarty was another example.

DONEGAL ..... 0-8  
DUBLIN ..... 0-11



# Dubs win the battle

REPORT BY

**PETER CAMPBELL**

PHOTOS BY

**THOMAS GALLAGHER**

Dublin proved the hungrier and superior team and they did this despite losing midfielder, Darren Homan, who was red carded after just 21 minutes for a high elbow on Martin Coll.

Donegal looked lethargic for much of the game and they were in trouble up the middle and again in the full-back line where Dessie Farrell was a constant thorn in their side.

Manager Mickey Moran conceded afterwards that it was a poor Donegal display and hinted that there was need for them to take stock of where they were at.

They will be relieved that they have five points already in the bag from the games prior to Christmas. After this defeat they will become Dublin supporters, hoping that they will win their games against Kerry and Louth especially. Donegal face the long trip to Kerry next, while they have Roscommon at home in their final game. A win for Dublin against Kerry and against Louth would be very helpful to the Donegal cause.

## ROBBED

The Donegal side were robbed of two of their starting line-up in the forward line prior to the game with the withdrawal of Andrew and James Gallagher because of 'flu.

It was clear from early on that the Dubs had come to Ballyshannon intent on getting the two points on offer. They were headed just once when Johnny McCafferty scored an impossible point from an angle in the 24th minute, but by half-time they were back in front by a point.

Indeed that point by McCafferty coincided with the start of a spell of dominance by the Dubs which saw them score seven points without replay

- Donegal not getting on the scoresheet again until sixteen minutes of the second half had elapsed.

Just to show the poor quality of the game, the winners had their last point twelve minutes into the second half. The second period was very much stop-start with Dublin using up any available time at kick-outs and frees and a number of harmless altercations occurred which was helped by the whistle-happy and fussy referee, Seamus Prior.

Donegal showed some urgency in the final quarter, but by that stage they were six points in arrears and they never looked likely to bridge the gap. Six second half wides by the visitors was also helpful in keeping the game alive.

Few Donegal players emerged with their reputations intact. However, Eamon Doherty was an exception in defence - at times he held the Dubs at bay singlehandedly and his move to the full-back line certainly helped him. He may yet prove to be the county's best choice for the No. 3 jersey.

Up front Brian Roper made a useful return and he was always the biggest threat, while Johnny McCafferty also did some useful work.

## BAD START

Dublin started well with Dessie Farrell pointing after just 30 seconds. Tony Boyle was wide from a free at the other end before Farrell, already causing panic in the Donegal defence, almost found the net - his fisted effort just wide after Tony Blake was stranded.

Donegal got back on level terms when Tony Boyle pointed after Adrian Sweeney was fouled, but at the other end Wayne McCarthy won and pointed a free for Dublin.

Johnny McCafferty pointed Donegal level after good work by John Gildea and Damien Diver, but by the 17th minute Dublin had opened up a two point gap with points from Colin Moran after a good move out of defence and then Vinny Murphy and Moran set up Ian Robertson to score.

Brian Roper was twice involved for Donegal before Gildea set up Brian McLaughlin for a good score, but it was to be McLaughlin's last involvement as he pulled a hamstring while scoring and he was replaced by Jim McGuinness.

Within two minutes the Dubs were reduced to fourteen men when Darren Homan connected with Martin Coll as he broke from defence. With Coll lying on the ground, Seamus Prior produced the red card and Homan had to take the long walk.

Eamon Doherty, now taking up marking duties on Farrell, found himself out around the midfield and he broke forward to link up and level matters with a mighty point from fully 50m. Immediately afterwards in the 24th minute Johnny McCafferty was fed by Barry Monaghan but he looked to have no angle out near the endline but he somehow managed to squeeze over a very good point to put Donegal ahead for the only time in the game.

## ADVANTAGE

The home side could have added to their advantage two minutes later when Brian Roper brilliantly found John Gildea free and he passed to Adrian Sweeney free in front of goal. However, Sweeney's tame effort was easily smothered by David Byrne and the chance was gone.

Dublin hit back with Vinnie Murphy winning a free off Mark Crossan for Dessie Farrell to point, and a minute later Crossan was again whistled for an off-the-ball tug and Wayne McCarthy converted to leave the Dublin ahead.

Farrell was wide from a 13m free a minute later and before the four minutes of added time had been played, Donegal had a new full-back - Raymond Sweeney replacing Mark Crossan.

**Half-time: Donegal 0-5, Dublin 0-6.**

The second half started as the first had ended with Dessie Farrell pointing after just 30 seconds, referee Prior failing to see a foul on Eamon

Doherty. Indeed the referee then got in the way of Johnny McCafferty and he lost possession for Colin Moran to extend the Dublin lead. Senan Connell with two very good points and another from Vinnie Murphy left the visitors comfortably in front by 0-11 to 0-5 with only twelve minutes of the new half gone.

Donegal pulled three points back in the next eleven minutes - Adrian Sweeney converting a free won by McCafferty; Jim McGuinness pointing and Sweeney converting another free won by Barry Monaghan.

Donegal had a goal chance in the 64th minute - Noel Hegarty made the inroads to find Brendan Devenney, but he was surrounded and the chance

was blocked for a '45' which was not given by the umpires. From there to the end Donegal tried to get the goal necessary but they found it impossible to get through a very tight Dublin defence.

**Dublin:** David Byrne; Martin Cahill, Paddy Christie, Coman Goggins; Shane Ryan, Jonathan McGee, Peadar Andrews; Darren Homan, Enda Sheehy; Senan Connell (0-2), Ian Robertson (0-1), Colin Moran (0-2); Dessie Farrell (0-3, one free), Vinnie Murphy (0-1), Wayne McCarthy (0-2, frees).

**Referee:** Seamus Prior (Leitrim).

## The Marksman

by Tom Cornack

**Tony Blake:** Despite one dodgy moment in the first half when he almost got caught with a Dessie Farrell flick that shaved the upright, and a kickout that went straight out over the line, another good performance from the keeper. 7

**Eamonn Doherty - (0-1)** - One of the few Donegal players that played anything like up to form. He even managed to push forward and kick the equalising point in the first half. 7

**Mark Crossan:** He was under pressure from very early and while he did win a fair share of possession, he gave away a few easy frees which were punished by Dublin. He was substituted shortly after being yellow carded just before half-time. 5

**Noel McGinley:** A way below par performance from the Glen man who found Dessie Farrell a real handful. He had little joy in curbing Wayne McCarthy when moved off Farrell. 5

**Shane Carr:** He won a share of breaking ball but his distribution at times let him down; he was replaced by Paddy Campbell in the second half. 5

**Martin Coll:** Showed up well early on, shipped a number of hefty challenges and was substituted in the second half. 6

**Damian Diver:** Found Colin Moran a real handful and was not as effective as normal. 6

**Barry Monaghan:** Got through a power of work right through the game and was not afraid to get stuck in. 6

**John Gildea:** Made a number of good fetches but tended to drift in and out of the game. 6

**Brian McLaughlin - (0-1)** - A late replacement for James Gallagher, only lasted twenty minutes before injury forced him out of the game. Before his departure he had been involved in a number of moves. 5

**Tony Boyle - (0-1)** - He won a fair amount of possession in the first half, but drifted totally out of the game when moved to full forward in the second half. 5

**Brian Roper:** Just back from injury worked hard but forced to come deep to win possession. 6

**Johnny McCafferty - (0-2)** - Kicked a delightful point and looked the most threatening of all the forwards. 7

**Adrian Sweeney - (0-2)** - The Dungloe man's quietest game of the campaign, he was denied a great chance of a goal by Dublin keeper David Byrne. Moved to centre forward in the second half with little effect. 5

**Stephen Cassidy:** He won his share of possession for the time he was in action but spoiled it all with poor distribution. 5

**Raymond Sweeney:** He came on for Mark Crossan and while he was a little more effective Vinny Murphy continued to cause problems. 5

**Jim McGuinness - (0-1)** - Worked hard when he was introduced but still well off the player he was a number of years ago. 5

**Noel Hegarty:** The Glenman came on for Martin Coll in the second half and gave his side a big lift. 6

**Paddy Campbell:** Like Noel Hegarty did well when introduced seemed to add a little steel to the defence.

## MANAGERS' REACTION

# 'A total disaster'

## - Moran

Donegal manager Mickey Moran was in despondent mood after Sunday's defeat by Dublin. Describing the display as a total disaster he said: "There are no excuses for a performance like that, it was probably as poor a performance as we have seen from a Donegal team in a long long time.

"Okay in the fairness they lifted it a bit in the second half, but it was not good enough. The time has now come for people to examine consciences and get things sorted out," said Moran.

### LOST SHAPE

"We lost our shape completely after they had the man sent off."

While accepting the goal chance missed by Adrian Sweeney just before half time was a factor in the game the Donegal boss did not put the defeat down to that one miss alone.

"It may have been a factor but it would be unfair to blame the defeat for the miss. We just did not perform on the day, it's as simple as that. We played it much too tight in the forward line.

"Dublin were playing the better football and when they had the man sent off, we seemed to lose our shape completely. It's at a time like that that you need cool heads and a little bit of composure, but we lacked that today."

The manager would not entirely agree that the team had reverted back to the old style short passing game.

"We are trying to play both the long and the short game, and it's a matter of getting the balance right. Against Galway we played a combination of both and it worked.

"You can also point to the forwards not creating the space, and that the quality of the ball going in was not great. But at the end of the day we did not perform all over the pitch and apply ourselves to the task in hand," he said.

### ENCOURAGING FEATURE

The only encouraging feature of the game from the manager's point of view was the way they battled back in the second half following Dublin's early second half scoring blitz.

"In fairness to the lads they dug deep in the second half when Dublin went five points clear. Not alone did we pull it back to three we had a couple of half chances of reducing it further. But to their credit Dublin held out."

The manager was also dismissive of the view that Dublin held the edge in fitness:

"I know Dublin have been training four nights a week but it was not fitness that cost us the game. We were going as well as them at the finish.

"Expectations may have been a little too high following our pre Christmas run and everybody must be realistic and understand that we may be starting from a lower base than even I believed," he concluded.

With two tough games left away to Kerry next time out and home to Roscommon in the last game the manager is under no illusion but his side are now in a fight for survival in division one.

"We need at least two points from our remaining two games to survive in the top flight," he concluded.

## Vital moment

The first of two key moments in the game came on the twenty on minute mark with the sending off of Dublin midfielder Darren Homan for a high challenge on Martin Coll. The second came seven minutes later when the Dublin keeper dashed off his line to deny Adrian Sweeney an almost certain goal. A Donegal goal at this stage would have propelled the home side into a two point lead.

## Match stats

### First half

	Goals	Pts	Frees	Wides	45s
Donegal	0	5	16	2	0
Dublin	0	6	12	3	1

### Second Half

Donegal	0	3	11	2	0
Dublin	0	5	12	6	0
<b>Totals</b>					
Donegal	0	8	27	4	0
Dublin	0	11	24	9	1

Donegal had two players booked, Eamon Doherty and John Gildea; Dublin one player booked, Peadar Andrews and they had Darren Homan red carded.



**KERRY** ..... **0-14**  
**DONEGAL** ..... **0-9**

Donegal battled in vain in Killarney on Sunday but came away with nothing as Kerry used their experience to take the points.

### PETER CAMPBELL reports from Fitzgerald Stadium, Killarney

The final result flattered the Kingdom somewhat as they had four points in the last eight minutes and they were gifted three points by a sloppy Donegal at the start of the second half.

Twelve Donegal wides plus a free count of 25-17 against them from Tipperary referee, Paddy Russell didn't help their cause, but they were much improved from their last outing against Dublin six weeks ago.

Although it was not as apparent to this writer, the referee's performance came under scrutiny from Donegal manager, Mickey Moran afterwards, and the free count certainly bears him out.

Donegal were awarded few frees in scoring range (although Michael Hegarty was guilty of a bad miss in the first half) and Kerry players Seamus Moynihan and Dara O Cinneide were given frees nearly every time they won possession.

Conditions for the encounter were far from ideal with a continuous drizzle accompanied by a strong wind, which seemed to get heavier and stronger when Donegal were playing against them in the second half.

Donegal got off to a perfect start with Adrian Sweeney pointing a free after 40 seconds and they held a three point lead after 24 minutes.

However, their tactic of withdrawing John Gildea to a covering position left them pretty short-handed in a vital area in front of the full-forward line.

This space was invariably filled by Kerry midfielder, Dara O Se who dropped back with great effect on numerous occasions. Consequently the quality of ball reaching the full-forward line was not always good.

Brendan Devenney did well initially in that line, but then did not use hard-won possession that well. He went into the game carrying what seemed a rib injury and was replaced early in the second half.

Donegal also lost Martin Coll late in the first half, replaced by Noel Hegarty. Coll also carried a leg injury into the game.

After the last disappointing outing against Dublin, the Donegal management will be happy with the performance, if not the result. The defence did well, despite losing Coll, against one of the best front lines in the country.

### Excellent

Paddy Campbell excelled at corner-back on Mike Frank Russell, as did Eamon Doherty on O Cinneide, while Shane Carr had an excellent game at wing-half.

Midfielder, Paul McGonigle, making his first full start, was industrious throughout.

After Adrian Sweeney had pointed Donegal in front, Dara O Cinneide levelled for Kerry after three minutes.

Sweeney put Donegal ahead again after a good long ball from John Gildea and the same player set up Brian Roper for another point with a quick free in the 11th minute.

Twice Brendan Devenney got inside his marker, but on both occasions he was luck to get a '45', both of which proved fruitless.

Typical of the way Donegal defenders were being drawn into defence saw Michael Hegarty and Brian Roper break up a Kerry attack and Shane Carr broke from defence to find Devenney who was fouled. Adrian Sweeney pointed the free to put Donegal 0-4 to 0-1 in front with 24 minutes gone.

As they did on several occasions, Kerry reacted swiftly with Aodhan Mac Gearailt pointing from distance.

By the 30th minute Kerry were back on terms with points from Mike Frank Russell and Dara O Cinneide, but they could well have been in front with Maurice Fitzgerald finding O Cinneide free in front of goal, but Tony Blake was out quick to block and Paul McGonigle got back splendidly to block O Cinneide's second attempt on the line.

In between Michael Hegarty was wide from a 30m free for Donegal when Devenney won a free.

Donegal finished the half strongly with points from Noel Hegarty from fully 50m and a final score from Adrian Sweeney. It could have been better when Brian Roper put John Gildea through but from 20m he pulled his effort wide of the posts.

Half-time: Kerry 0-4, Donegal 0-6.

### Worst possible start

Donegal got the worst possible start to the second half by handing their opponents three points inside three minutes.

After just 30 seconds Michael Hegarty won a break and was fouled, but he proceeded to kick the free away and Kerry broke swiftly for Aodhan Mac Gearailt to point from 50m inside 30 seconds.

Another minute had just elapsed when Noel Hegarty, breaking from defence, passed to Noel Kennelly, who accepted the gift gratefully. Then on the 38th minute corner back, Mike Hassett accepted a ball given away by Jim McGuinness to get forward and put Kerry ahead for the first time.

In the next twenty minutes Donegal strove manfully and gave as good as they got. McGuinness became more influential at midfield and his partner Paul McGonagle broke forward to level matters in the 40th minute.

Johnny McCafferty replaced Devenney and was causing trouble in the Kerry defence, although his workrate did not always give maximum return.

Shane Carr and Andrew Gallagher combined to set up Noel McGinley to put Donegal back in the lead in the 48th minute. Yellow cards were to follow for Brian Roper and Jim McGuinness as Kerry were to get a fortunate equaliser in the 50th minute - a Tomas O Se long punt hopping in front of Tony Blake and over the bar.

A third yellow card was handed out by Russell to Noel McGinley after Noel Hegarty was fouled and a little bit of pushing and shoving took place.

### Fisted point

Donegal were to lose the free which in turn was to lead to the Kerry lead score, Dara O Se driving long and Maurice Fitzgerald getting his fist to the ball to put it over the bar.

The margin was increased to

two points in the 60th minute when Denis Dwyer pointed, but Donegal hit back with Andrew Gallagher getting a great score from an angle.

Kerry finished strongly with Dara O Cinneide pointing a free in the 65th minute; Maurice Fitzgerald (with his left) pointing from 50m; O Cinneide again in the 71st minute and finally Fitzgerald in the fourth minute of added time. O Cinneide's last point could easily have been a goal as the ball came back to him off an upright, but Tony Blake made a great stop.

Towards the end Donegal had a couple of half-chances for goal with Andrew Gallagher and Johnny McCafferty firing wide.

**Kerry:** Declan O'Keefe; Mike Hassett (0-1), Seamus Moynihan, Michael McCarthy; Tom O'Sullivan, Tomas O Se (0-1), Kieran Scanlon; Dara O Se, Donal Daly; Denis Dwyer (0-1), Maurice Fitzgerald (0-3), Noel Kennelly (0-1); Michael F. Russell (0-1), Dara O Cinneide (0-3, one free), Aodhan Mac Gearailt (0-2). Subs., William Kirby for Daly (47th min.); Eoin Brosnan for Mac Gearailt (49 mins.), Mossie Lyons for McCarthy (53 mins.)

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Paddy Campbell, Eamon Doherty, Noel McGinley (0-1); Mark Crossan, Martin Coll, Shane Carr; Jim McGuinness, Paul McGonigle (0-1); Michael Hegarty, John Gildea, Brian Roper (0-1); Andrew Gallagher (0-1), Adrian Sweeney (0-4, two frees), Brendan Devenney. Subs., Noel Hegarty (0-1) for Coll (31 mins.); Johnny McCafferty for Devenney (43 mins.); Michael Doherty for Roper (62 mins.), Ray Sweeney for Crossan (67 mins.)

**Referee:** Paddy Russell (Tipperary).

# THE MARKSMAN

**Tony Blake:** Although carrying an injury into the game, Blake has a good game, saving twice from O Cinneide. 8

**Paddy Campbell:** Very competitive against top class forward Russell and won his battle. 8

**Eamon Doherty:** Up against another top class performer in O Cinneide, Doherty coped well and will remain at full back. 7

**Noel McGinley:** Although he operated mostly at half-back, McGinley had a good game, getting forward to score. 7.

**Mark Crossan:** Injury meant that Mark had to come off near the end, but the Letterkenny man benefitted from his move from full-back. 7.

**Martin Coll:** Obviously troubled by injury, Coll was causing concern for the management team from early on. 5

**Shane Carr:** This was possibly the Donegal town man's best display in a Donegal jersey. Defended well and used the ball well. 8

**Jim McGuinness:** A typical McGuinness display, he got on the ball and gave Kerry plenty of trouble. 7

**Paul McGonigle:** Excellent workrate, McGonigle covered every blade of grass and after a nervy opening, warmed to his task, scoring a fine point. 7

**Michael Hegarty:** Very much below par, Hegarty never really came to terms with the game and his missed free with the breeze underlined his overall game. 5

**John Gildea:** Contributed quite an amount, but failed to get on the scoreboard. Not really used as a centre-forward. 7

**Brian Roper:** Got on the ball a lot in the first half and used the ball well, but faded in the second half. 6

**Andrew Gallagher:** Supply in first half was not of good quality, but performed well in second half against Moynihan. 7

**Adrian Sweeney:** Did well in the first half scoring four points, but just couldn't make an impression when moved to centre-forward. 7

**Brendan Devenney:** His workrate in the opening half was good despite carrying an injury, but did not make enough of his chances. 6

**Noel Hegarty:** Introduced late in the first half, Hegarty did well at centre-back and gave Donegal forward momentum. 7

**Johnny McCafferty:** The Termon seemed over-anxious at times but his entry lifted Donegal and with a little more confidence, has plenty to offer. 7

**Michael Doherty and Raymond Sweeney** not on long enough to rate.

## MATCH FACTS

### FIRST HALF

	Gls	Pts	Frees	Wides	
45s					
Kerry	0	4	14	1	0
Donegal	0	6	8	7	2

### SECOND HALF

Kerry	0	9	11	3	0
Donegal	0	3	9	5	0

### TOTALS

Kerry	0	14	25	4	0
Donegal	0	9	14	12	2

Donegal had three players booked - Brian Roper, Jim McGuinness and Noel McGinley.

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

Peter Campbell reports from MacCumhail Park  
 Photos by Thomas Gallagher

A goal and a point in injury time put Donegal back in relegation trouble as Roscommon joined their neighbours in an all-Connacht semi-final line-up.

It was a disastrous finish for the home side who, despite again notching up thirteen wides, had built up a three point lead (0-11 to 0-8) and looked on their way to victory with a minute of normal time left.

Then Roscommon struck with a point followed by a Gerry Lohan goal and a fine point to put a different look on the scoreboard.

The win means that Donegal, although finishing third from bottom, must now play off with Louth to see who joins Kerry in Division 2 next year.

The deficiencies in Donegal's attack, especially in relation to clinical finishing, were again on show, with a large number of good opportunities missed.

The home side got the benefit of the doubt on a number of occasions; they hit the upright on three occasions and a number of opportunities late in the second half could have put them out of sight.

The finish showed a fair amount of inexperience among the Donegal side as they allowed Roscommon score 1-2 in the final minutes, the goal being created by extrovert goalkeeper, John Curran, who came fully 50m from his goal to set up the attack.

The home side got off to a poor start and it was close to the break before they got their heads in front for the first time.

They were never again headed until Lohan's goal sealed their fate in injury time.

Throughout the game they won good possession around the middle of the field and while they were winning ball in the full-forward line, they were having difficulty in creating good openings.

The wide count of thirteen is a damning statistic and half of those were from very kickable positions, with a couple of close-in frees included.

Defensively, they never looked as commanding as they did a week previously in Killarney. A number of players were under pressure Tony Blake

was brought into action to make brilliant stops on three occasions in the second half.

From being the weakest link in Killarney, Michael Hegarty improved significantly this time to being among Donegal's brightest, picking up a lot of breaking ball and pushing Donegal forward intelligently.

Adrian Sweeney looked to have the beating of his man at full-forward but found the area too crowded at times, which suited the defence. John Gildea, Jim McGuinness and Eamon Doherty all played their part, but even when they were in front, Donegal did not look convincing.

Donegal gifted Roscommon an opening point with a silly foul which Eddie Lohan converted.

While Adrian Sweeney levelled from a free after a foul on John Gildea, Roscommon looked the brighter in the opening minutes.

By the 11th minute they were ahead by 0-4 to 0-1 with points from Stephen Lohan and two from Conor Conneely.

**Overhead**

To underline Donegal's approach, Andrew Gallagher was wide from an overhead effort with Jim McGuinness free outside.

Michael Hegarty was instrumental in getting Donegal back in contention, involved twice before winning a free from which Adrian Sweeney pointed.

After a great delivery from Noel Hegarty, Adrian Sweeney won a free but Andrew Gallagher was wide from 21m in the 19th minute. A minute later he had a chance to redeem himself when Johnny McCafferty put him through but he elected to go for goal but found the sidenetting.

Another wide followed from Jim McGuinness and Donegal were hit on the counter-attack and with defenders missing, Nigel Dineen increased the Roscommon lead to 0-5 to 0-2.

Between the 26th and 34th minute Donegal got the show back on the road with points from Paul McGonigle, Michael Hegarty with his left, and Adrian Sweeney free and Jim McGuinness to put Donegal one ahead.

It could have been a better return as in between Andrew Gallagher had a fisted effort for a point blocked, but the ball fell to Johnny McCafferty, but his first time effort was straight at the Roscommon 'keeper.

In added time Gerry Lohan pointed from an angle to leave the sides deadlocked at the break - 0-6 apiece.

The second half saw Roscommon take the game to the home side early on with Tony Blake going full length to brilliantly keep out a Stephen Lohan effort, while at the other end Michael Hegarty was wide from a 21m free.

Donegal went in front in the 40th minute when Noel McGinley and Michael Hegarty set up Adrian Sweeney to find the range from fully 50m.

Hegarty was again involved along with John Gildea and Jim McGuinness before Andrew Gallagher pointed to put Donegal two ahead.

Roscommon hit back with two points inside two minutes to draw level, Conor Conneely forcing Tony Blake to tip over and Gerry Lohan availing of a long clearance from defence.

Again Donegal hit back with Gildea finding Jim McGuinness with a long clearance and he set up Adrian Sweeney to put Donegal back in the lead in the 46th minute.

Two minutes later an Adrian Sweeney free was fielded by Michael Hegarty to turn and point.

The goal chances were still presenting themselves with Conneely keeping Tony Blake on his toes at one end, while Andrew Gallagher hit a post at the other. Then in the 55th minute Jim McGuinness and James Gallagher created the best opening of the game for Andrew Gallagher, but he again blazed wide of the goal from inside the 13m line.

Donegal received a let-off when referee, Seamus McCormack, went for his book after a tackle by Mark Crossan, but realised that he had booked him just minutes earlier. The referee let him off with a tick.

With eight minutes of normal time left on the clock, Donegal went three points clear with a good effort from Johnny McCafferty from near the sideline.

With just two minutes to go they had a great chance to increase that lead when a James Gallagher free fell to Adrian Sweeney, but he hooked it just wide.

That miss, plus all the others, was to come back to haunt Donegal in the final minutes.

**Winning goal**

Clifford McDonald broke forward to reduce the margin to two points in the 69th minute, and then a minute into added time, 'keeper John Curran soloed to the 50m line and found bit Peter Mahon, to continue the move which ended with Stephen Lohan being free in front of goal to fire home the winning goal.

Just for good measure Roscommon won the kick-out and Lohan, from near the sideline, hoisted another point to put his side into the semi-finals.

The result means that Donegal have lost their four games after Christmas but more importantly, their level of performance has left some pessimism over the side's ability to play any real part in the forthcoming Ulster Championship.

**Donegal:** Tony Blake; Paddy Campbell, Eamon Doherty, Noel McGinley; Mark Crossan, Noel Hegarty, Shane Carr; John Gildea, Paul McGonigle (0-1); Jim McGuinness (0-1), Michael Hegarty (0-2), Brian Roper; Andrew Gallagher (0-1), Adrian Sweeney (0-5, three frees), Johnny McCafferty (0-1). Sub., James Gallagher for Roper (47 mins.)

**Roscommon:** John Curran; Denis Gavin, John Whyte, Ian Daly; Brendan Burke, Francie Grehan, Clifford McDonald (0-1); Seamus O'Neill, Peter Mahon; Conor Conneely (0-3), John Hanley, Eddie Lohan (0-1, free); Nigel Dineen (0-1), Stephen Lohan (1-2), Gerry Lohan (0-2). Subs., Fergal O'Donnell for E. Lohan (41 mins.); Gary Cox for Hanley (54 mins.); Kevin Kane for Burke, Michael Ryan for O'Neill (both 63 mins.)

Referee: Seamus McCormack (Meath).

**MATCH FACTS**

**First Half**

	Goals	Pts	Frees	Wides
Donegal	0	6	16	7
Roscommon	0	6	14	4

**Second Half**

Donegal	0	11	11	4
Roscommon	1	4	9	9

**Totals**

Donegal	0	11	33	11
Roscommon	1	10	23	13

Dublin midfielder was sent off while his team mate Peadar Andrews, along with Donegal's Mark Crossan, Eamonn Doherty were all booked.

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Tyrone	5	4	0	1	10
Galway	7	5	1	0	11
Roscommon	7	4	1	2	9
Offaly	6	2	2	2	8
Dublin	6	2	0	4	6
Donegal	7	3	1	4	5
Kerry	7	2	0	5	4
Louth	* Not played due to F.M.D.				

\* All were awarded two points from their postponed ties with Louth.

## MATCH STATS

DONEGAL	
Wides	10 (7 first half)
Frees	19 (10 first half)
Goals	3 (all first half)
Points	12 (2 frees, one pen.)
Yellow Cards	2 (McGinley, McGuinness)
Red Cards	None

LOUTH	
Wides	8 (3 first half)
Frees	17 (7 first half)
Goals	1 (second half)
Points	11 (3fs)
Yellow Cards	2 (S. O'Hanlon, Neary)
Red Cards	None

## MAN OF THE MATCH

**Michael Hegarty:** Newspaper headlines will, by the time you read this, have proclaimed Brendan Devenney as the scoring star, which he undoubtedly was. Some may suggest therefore, he should be an automatic for this selection. However, I have never seen Michael Hegarty play so well for Donegal at any level. His passing, covering, vision were a joy to behold and his three points from play confirm his finishing ability. He created two of Brendan Devenney's three goals, and for my money was Donegal's man-of-the-match.

James Gallagher and Hegarty points came either side of a Seamus O'Hanlon score but Devenney's third goal had Louth all over the place. To their credit they battled on, Martin Farrelly and Christy Grimes pointing while Devenney ended a memorable first half,

pointing a free after he had been fouled. Half time, Donegal 3-5, Louth 0-4.

With their lead never to be seriously threatened - Louth wides twice in two minutes confirming their malaise - Donegal used Jim McGuinness well in midfield while Damien Diver at wing back made a lot of good covering runs and despite a serious hand injury, looked one hundred percent and never held back in the tackle.

Louth half back Johnny Neary clipped over a brace of points as Donegal went to sleep for a moment but a class McGuinness score from the wing and a fisted McCafferty point had Donegal on their way to a comprehensive win when David Reilly stole in for a late consolation goal. Young Toye added another Donegal score, a seven point victory margin the least Donegal deserved.

**DONEGAL:** Gerard McGill; Patrick

McConigley, Mark Crossan, Noel McGinley; Barry Monaghan, Kieran Browne, Raymond Sweeney; Paul McGonigle, John Gildea; Adrian Sweeney 0-2, 1f, 1p; Michael Hegarty 0-3, James Gallagher 0-2; Johnny McCafferty 0-1, Jim McGuinness 0-1, Brendan Devenney 3-2, 1f. Subs: Damien Diver for Browne (ht); Christy Toye for A. Sweeney (58); Colin Molloy for McCafferty (64); Seamie Friel for McGuinness (67).

**LOUTH:** Colm McNally; Brian Philips, Derek Shevlin 0-1, David Brennan; Simon Gerard, Colin Goss, John Neary 0-2; Seamus O'Hanlon 0-1, Colin Quinn; Christy Grimes 0-1, Martin Farrelly 0-1, Mark Stanfield 0-1, f; David Reilly 1-0, Ollie McDonnell 0-1, J.P. Rooney. Subs, Keith Lynch for Goss (25); Colin Kelly 0-3, 2 fs for Rooney (43); Cathal O'Hanlon for Stanfield (48); Alan McKenny for Philips (50).

**Referee:** Seamus Prior (Leitrim).

# Devenney goal spree secures Div. One status

DONEGAL ..... 3-12

LOUTH ..... 1-11

Michael Daly reports from  
Brewster Park

Photos by Michael O'Donnell

Donegal's 12-year-reign in the National league's top flight was all but secured by half-time with three goals from the in-form Brendan Devenney effectively wrapping this game up for Mickey Moran's side.

Donegal were at times brilliant, scoring 2-9 from play, Louth were at times dreadful, guilty of missing some easy second half frees that might have made a contest out of this otherwise one-sided affair.

As for Brendan Devenney, his hat-trick came less than 24 hours after he had been part of a Finn Harps' side who also had a hat-trick hero, Kevin McHugh, with Devenney showing no ill effects from his exertions with Harps when he burst into action after three minutes in Brewster Park.

"I'm not too tired, Jonathan Speak knew how important this game was to Donegal so he didn't start me last night in the Harps game, but even so I feel pretty fit at the moment and the regular training while in Australia with the Irish team has done me no harm," a nonchalant Devenney told the Democrat/DPP after the game.

However, if Devenney was the scoring star, Kilcar's Michael Hegarty was the undisputed maker

and shaker, orchestrating all that was good about this Donegal performance from centre half forward where his passing and neat inter-play unhinged a Louth defence who replaced Hegarty's marker after 25 minutes.

At midfield Paul McGonigle's apprenticeship continues apace. Again he played sensible, intelligent football, his pace a real asset while the more experienced John Gildea seemed to revel in the 'holding' role and used his power

and strength to offset Seamus O'Hanlon who usually exerts quite an influence at midfield.

### IMPRESSIVE

Donegal's central spine was very impressive. New 'keeper Gerard McGill was unfortunate not to keep a clean sheet, Louth scoring a late, late goal, but his kickouts were excellent while Mark Crossan and Kieran Browne were always in control at the back, Browne replaced due to a hamstring injury at half-time.

If Louth were less than impressive at times, it was mainly due to Donegal's sheer dominance and scoring power.

They did the damage early on. Michael Hegarty drove forward after three minutes but his goal

bound efforts deflected off a defender into the air and Devenney was best placed to flick the ball to the net for his first goal.

Hegarty supplied a sublime 40 metre pass on 20 minutes to place Devenney inside the corner back. But the International Rules star still had lots to do, racing away from two defenders before planting the ball confidently into the corner of the net.

Eight minutes later another superb long ball, this one from Adrian Sweeney, saw Devenney again cutting through to shoot low to the net for his hat-trick.

Indeed, Donegal should have been more than ten points clear at half-time, Jim McGuinness, playing at full-forward, unlucky not to find the net after beating several defenders, his shot hammering into the side netting.

And, when one considers Donegal's Adrian Sweeney could afford the luxury of firing a 47th minute penalty over the bar, then this really was a very comprehensive,

comfortable Donegal victory.

### MINORS

### INTRODUCED

As if to underpin Donegal's second half dominance, manager

Mickey Moran was able to introduce two minor stars of 2001 into his side in the second half, Conal Molloy from Killybegs and Christy Toye, St. Michael's, making their senior inter-county debuts with Toye serving notice that there is a real future for Donegal football when he hoisted the game's final point four minutes into added time for injuries.

In the second half Donegal did ease back a little, but Louth, to their credit, did improve, sub. Colin Kelly scoring three points and corner forward David Reilly fisting the ball to the net for a late Louth consolation goal, three minutes into added time.

However, Donegal were always comfortably in front and securing their Division 1 status is a magnificent end to a protracted league season, which, bar a few unlucky results, particularly against Roscommon, could have been so very different.

For Donegal all six forwards finished on the scoresheet, all six performed admirably with Jim McGuinness, when switched at half time to midfield, doing particularly well in broken play where he won handfuls of valuable possession.

In every sector Donegal played well with Noel McGinley having an outstanding second half while Patrick McConigley was always tidy in his corner.

After 20 minutes Donegal led 2-2 to 0-1, Devenney with the goals and points from Sweeney and Hegarty, Louth's only score from a Mark Stanfield free.

## KEY MOMENT

Brendan Devenney turning up! any one of his three goals could be regarded as a key moment, but hitting three inside 28 minutes left Louth chasing a hopeless cause.

## REFEREE WATCH

Seamus Prior wasn't to do this game originally, Michael Curley listed. Prior did Donegal no harm, another referee might well have disallowed Brendan Devenney's first goal - and would have been wrong to do so. He was decisive when blowing for Donegal's penalty, Jim McGuinness upended and while he booked two players from each side, he kept his head and the players never gave him any major trouble.

# Moran proud of his side

Donegal manager Mickey Moran was very proud of his side when he spoke after the game. He felt the side played with real heart and considering their lack of preparation for the game, had played some very useful football.

"We moved the ball very well and that's the best way to get around a big, physical team. At times, considering our lack of preparation, we played some neat football and we got the scores that mattered," he said.

Moran had high praise for Kilcar's Michael Hegarty: "Michael is a marvellous footballer, there is no doubt about it. I told him that but I don't think he realises himself what talent he has. He has a great attitude and he is marvellous to work with, as are all the squad."

He added that Damien Diver's decision to play despite great personal risk, underlined the commitment of the squad: "Damien Diver was told by a consultant not to

play today and that if he did, he was doing so at his own risk. But Damien came in today and forcefully made his case just before the start and we decided to strap his wrist and hand and when he came in he did very well."

Asked what winning meant to him, Moran stated that his side could now plan for Division one. "I think we are there on merit and after the club league programme finishes here I hope to get the players working on weights as we get ready for next year," he added.

He thought the early goals were key to victory: "The early goals gave us a good platform and from then on Louth were chasing the game. We went to sleep a little in the second half, but that's the nature of things. We just kept in touch, Mickey Hegarty got a point and Christy Toye hit another at the end to lift us anytime they came close."

He said it was a day when the

more experienced players had to stand up and be counted: "Kieran Browne and Gerard McGill were making their debuts so it put the pressure on the older players, it was time they led from the front and they did that today."

He also felt the younger players in the squad will learn from the experience: "Christy Toye and Conal Molloy are young lads in the panel and we want to give them an opportunity and today was a day we could give them a run."

He said his side had played with "heart and passion" but he was also conscious of the skill levels his players exuded, none more so than scoring star, Brendan Devenney: "We were fortunate that Brendan was back too because he made a fabulous contribution. He has pace and he can finish and today great passing and inter-play saw him finish with three brilliant goals. He really is a marvellous asset to this team."

