

2002

Team Manager: Mickey Moran

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

Ulster Senior Football Championship

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|---------|------|--------|------|
| 1 | 12 th May | Breffni Park | Donegal | 1-17 | Cavan | 0-15 |
| 2 | 28 th May | McCumhaill Park | Donegal | 3-12 | Down | 1-06 |
| 3 | 16 th June | Clones | Donegal | 1-09 | Derry | 0-10 |
| 4 | 7 th July Ulster Final | Clones | Donegal | 1-10 | Armagh | 1-14 |

All Ireland Qualifiers 2003

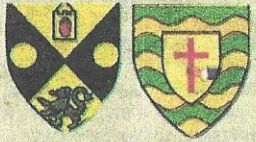
| | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|---------|------|--------|------|
| 5 | 21 st July | Croke park | Donegal | 1-13 | Meath | 0-14 |
| 6 | 5 th Aug | Croke Park | Donegal | 0-14 | Dublin | 2-08 |
| 7 | 18 th Aug | Qtr. Final Croke park | Donegal | 0-07 | Dublin | 1-14 |
| | 25 th Aug | Semi final Croke Park | Kerry | 3-19 | Cork | 2-07 |
| | 1 st Sept. | Semi final Croke Park | Armagh | 1-14 | Dublin | 1-13 |
| | 22 nd Sept. | All Ireland final: Croke Park | Armagh | 1-12 | Kerry | 0-14 |

National Football League. - 2003 Allianz NFL Division 1

| | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------|------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| 8 | 10 th Feb | Parnell Park | Dublin | 2-10 | Donegal | 0-14 |
| 9 | 17 th Feb | Tullamore | Offaly | 0-13 | Donegal | 0-16 |
| 10 | 24 th Feb | Fr. Tierney Park | Donegal | 0-07 | Galway | 0-09 |
| 11 | 3 rd March | Maccumhaill Park | Donegal | 1-10 | Tyrone | 0-11 |
| 12 | 10 th March | Cusack Park, Mullingar | Westmeath | 0-07 | Donegal | 1-06 |
| 13 | 24 th March | Fr. Tierney Park | Donegal | 1-12 | Cork | 0-09 |
| 14 | 31 st March | Hyde Park | Roscommon | 2-13 | Donegal | 1-12 |
| | | Div 1 Final | Tyrone | 0-15 | Cavan | 0-05 |

DONEGAL END CHAMPIONSHIP BLUES IN BREFFNI

Tuesday, 14th May, 2002



CAVAN0-15
DONEGAL1-17

Tom Comack reports from
Kingspan Breffni Park

Donegal finally ended their Ulster championship blues with this comprehensive victory over national league finalists Cavan in Kingspan Breffni Park - their first win in the competition in four years.

How ironic it should be that it was the Breffni County which was the last side that they beat in the championship. That was in the semi final of 1998 on their way to the final. Lets hope that's an omen.

And while they came close in recent seasons with draws two with Armagh and one with Fermanagh, the truth is the Donegal faithful were savouring victory on Sunday long before Paddy Russell's final whistle.

This game was as incredible, as it was as good as over after only seven minutes play. Donegal's

comprehensive start was certainly not what a Cavan outfit running on low self esteem following their recent Allianz national league drubbing by Tyrone needed.

Brian Roper's goal in a little over a minute into the contest might not have been the mortal blow, but it certainly had the Breffni boys gasping for oxygen. And when Adrian Sweeney and Brendan Devenney hit three rapid-fire points they must have been thinking oh no not again.

Hoping to bounce back from the trauma of the

Tyrone defeat the last thing Cavan wanted was to find themselves six points down inside seven minutes.

They did hit three quick points in a two minute spell between the eighth and tenth minute from Gerald Pierson two frees and one from play for Larry Reilly. But Donegal struck back and by the 23rd minute those three Cavan points were cancelled out with strikes from Brendan Devenney, Kevin Cassidy and Adrian Sweeney.

The margin was out to eight points at half-time Donegal 1-10, Cavan 0-5, thanks to further points from Brendan Devenney, Michael Hegarty and Jim McGuinness. Gerald Pierson and Anthony Forde hit the two Cavan scores.

Within three minutes of the restart Brendan Devenney with a fourteen metre free had extended the Donegal advantage out to

Man of Match

While Mark Crossan, Paul McGonagle, Michael Hegarty, and Adrian Sweeney were all in the running the award had to go to Brendan Devenney. Not alone did he finish up as his sides top scorer with 0-7, but despite being double marked for much of the game Cavan had simply no answer for the St. Eunan's man.

nine points.

However, it was then that Cavan produced their best spell to hit five points in a glorious ten minute spell four from from Gerald Pierson and one from Peter Reilly.

But as they did in the first half, Donegal weathered the storm and responded with strikes from Devenney, Sweeney and Hegarty to restore Donegal's seven point margin 1-14 to 0-10 with under fifteen minutes to go.

With Thomas Prior joining John Haran for an early shower shortly after the Cavan goose was well and truly cooked.

The game over as a contest, even though Cavan outscored Donegal 0-5 to 0-3 in the closing ten minutes to put a more respectable gloss on the scoreboard.

Outclassed

While the victory itself was pleasing, even more

satisfying was the manner of its execution. For with the exception of a ten minute spell in the middle of the first half and for a similar period again in the early stages of the second half when they shot ten points of their total, Cavan were out foxed, out played and outclassed.

Even when Donegal were down numerically following the somewhat harsh sending off of John Haran just before half-time, they were still very much in command. The only mystery being that just five point was all that separated the teams at the finish.

In fact so complete was the display that they were in top in almost every sector of the park.

Okay, Jason Reilly had his moments when he moved out field in the second half. Gerald Pierson was deadly from frees, while Peter Reilly had a good spell when given the free role after half-time.

And while Brendan Devenney, with 0-7 and Adrian Sweeney with 0-5 along with goal poacher Roper were the toast of the fans afterwards, this was far from a three man show.

The launching pad for this win was in the middle third of the field where John Gildea, Jim McGuinness, Paul McGonagle and Michael Hegarty Donegal reigned

supreme.

And with Mark Crossan and Shane Carr getting the better of Cavan's great hopes Jason and Larry Reilly Donegal had that winning look about them from a very early stage.

This victory means that Donegal now advance to the first round proper where they play Down in Sean MacCumhail Park on Sunday week.

Donegal: Tony Blake; Shane Carr, Noel McGinley; Raymond Sweeney, Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy (0-1); John Gildea, Paul McGonagle; John Haran, Michael Hegarty (0-3), Jim McGuinness; Adrian Sweeney (0-5,2F), Brendan Devenney (0-7,4F), Brian Roper (1-0); Subs: Damian Diver for K. Cassidy 50 mins; Christy Toye for B. Roper;

Cavan: Aaron Donoghue; Eamonn Reilly, Thomas Prior, Colm Hannon; Michael Brides, Anthony Forde(0-2), James Doonan; Pierce McKenna, Cathal Collins; Darren Rabbit, Peter Reilly(0-1), Gerald Pierson (0-9,8F);Larry Reilly (0-1), Jason Reilly, Paul Galligan; Subs: Dermot McCabe for P. Galligan 30 mins; Philip Kermath for D. Rabbit half-time; Barry McCrudden (0-1)for C. Collins 42mins.

Referee: Paddy Russell (Tipperary).

Donegal brush aside Down

Man of the Match Adrian Sweeney is the star scoring 1-5. Donegal now face Derry in semi-final on June 16 in Clones

DONEGAL.....3-12
DOWN.....1-6

SUPERIOR Donegal cruised into the semi-finals of the Ulster Senior Football Championship for the first time in four years after a comfortable win over lethargic Down in Ballybofey yesterday.

Mickey Moran's side will meet neighbours and arch rivals Derry in the last four on Sunday week (June 16) and on the basis of this display stand a real chance of reaching their first provincial final since 1998.

While Mickey Moran's side had a nervous start and found themselves 1-1 to 0-2 behind after fifteen minutes they recovered well to run out easy winners. Apart from the opening quarter dire Down played second fiddle to the home side who led 1-7 to 1-3 at the break.

The vital first goal for Donegal came after 34 minutes when Man of the Match Adrian Sweeney shrugged off the challenge of marker Ciaran Byrne before superbly rounding the keeper to score a fine individual goal.

Sweeney was a constant thorn in the side of the Down rearguard all afternoon and finished with a personal tally of 1-5.

Others to shine for the home side were John Gildea, Brian Roper and defenders Noel McGinley, Mark Crossan and Shane Carr.

EASY

The second half was nothing less than a lark in the park for Donegal who added 2-5 to their half time tally. The goals came in the 44th and 64th minutes respectively from lively forwards Brian Roper and Brendan Devenney.

Down's tale of woe for the afternoon was reflected in the fact that they went over 32 minutes without a score on either side of the half. Indeed the manager just a single score from play in the entire second half. All three points in the second period came from substitutes Ronan Murtagh, Ronan Sexton and Shane King.

Donegal boss Mickey Moran was well satisfied with the win afterwards.

"We were a bit shaky for the first fifteen minutes but the goal from Adrian Sweeney changed the game completely. We picked off some delightful scores in the second half and ran out comfortable winners. It's a great win for us and we are really looking forward to the semi-final," he said.

Long before the final whistle hundreds of disappointed Down fans were flooding out of the exit gates in Ballybofey after a dismal afternoon. They showed fleeting glimpses than an upset might have been on the cards in the first twenty minutes after veteran James McCartan bagged an opportunist goal in the 15th minute.

The goal strike gave the Mourne men a 1-1 to 0-2 lead and with 38-years-old Mickey Linden and Michael Walsh impressive up front along with hard working centre half back Sean Ward they looked as if they could cause an upset.

Indeed full forward Aidan O'Prey squandered a golden opportunity for a goal when he was put clear on goal by Linden after ten minutes but his weak shot was comfortably blocked by Donegal netminder Tony Blake.

However, as the half wore on Donegal got a stranglehold on proceedings.

John Gildea excelled at midfield and with Michael Hegarty carving out the vital openings for the inside forwards it wasn't long until the home side were in control.

A goal and three points from Sweeney and one from Devenney in a riveting ten minute spell before the break gave Donegal a four points lead at the interval. Any remote hopes of a Down comeback were dashed in the first ten minutes of the second half.

After Michael Walsh had ballooned a half chance wide for Down in the opening minute Donegal seized the initiative. John Gildea ran from the half way line to score a fantastic point three minutes after the resumption and after that Donegal never looked back.

Jim McGuinness and Adrian

Sweeney added points before Brian Roper seized on a deflected shot and after side-stepping the Down keeper Peter Travers he crashed the ball into the net from close range.

The goal gave Donegal an unassailable 2-10 to 1-3 lead. After that it was always going to be a question of how much Donegal would win by. The added another superbly taken individual goal from Devenney six minutes from time and points from Roper and Devenney put the icing on the cake.

Down go into the back door All-Ireland qualifiers and will need to improve significantly on this showing to stand any chance in the championship.

Donegal: T Blake, N McGinley, M Crossan (captain), S Carr, R Sweeney, B Monaghan, K Cassidy, J Gildea (0-1), J McGuinness (0-1), C Toye, M Hegarty, B Roper (1-1) A Sweeney (1-5, one free), B Devenney (1-4, two frees). P McGonigle,

Down: P Travers, J Clarke, C Byrne, B Grant, S Poland, S Ward, L Doyle, B Burns, A Molloy, D Gordon, M Walsh, B Coulter (0-1), M Linden (0-2), A O'Prey and J McCartan (1-0).

Sub used: R Murtagh (0-1) for Poland (injured 24 mins), R Sexton (0-1) for Walsh (46 mins), P McConville for Burns (54 mins) and S King (0-1) for Gordon (56 mins).

Referee: G Kinneavy (Roscommon).

MAN of the Match Adrian Sweeney was delighted with his sides comfortable win over Down.

The full forward who bagged 1-5 in a super display on the edge of the square said it was time Donegal made the breakthrough again.

"I've been around for five to six years at this level and I've won nothing. There is a few players like that in the squad but there is a great hunger in the squad to do well this year. Derry area seasoned championship side and it will be a tough match for us. We will have to work hard to win that match," he said.

The Dungleoe man said his side recovered from an indifferent start against Down to run out easy winners.

"We didn't expect it to be that easy.

They came at us early on and got a goal that gave us the kick up the backside that we needed. We managed to get ourselves together after that and we got the vital scores," he said.

Sweeney's 34th minute goal was one of the highlights of the match.

"When I first goal the ball I thought about going for a point but then I hesitated for a second. The full back slipped and that left me in a one to one situation with the keeper. I looked up and could see the angle was too tight for a shot so I decided to go around the keeper. It was on my right foot but I used the left to be sure of it," he said.

We're getting better-Sweeney

CHAMPIONSHIP 2002/Ulster SF semi-final

Sweeney spot on as Donegal advance

THE essentials of an Ulster football semi-final were singularly missing on a rain-sodden pitch in Clones yesterday as a more sprightly and youthful Donegal side made a return to final day after a lapse of four years.

Happenings in Korea played a major part in robbing the occasion of atmosphere and a crowd of less than 2,000 was in the ground for the throw-in. That figure was probably doubled when the soccer game's penalty shoot-out concluded.

Donegal were fully deserving of their win, although Derry supporters were convinced it would have been a different story had they not lost two of their key players, Johnny McBride and Conleth Gilligan, in the final quarter. Both players were sent off by Cork referee Michael Collins, Gilligan for a second bookable offence.

The ball became lifeless on a soft pitch and this contributed to an annoying stop-start pattern as a result of a succession of frees.

Derry manager Eamonn Coleman was particularly annoyed with the surface and could not understand the Ulster Council's decision to stage two matches at the venue before the main attraction, given the bad weather.

Derry's generally poor form was underlined in the first half when, after Enda Muldoon had brought the house down with a huge opening point from the sideline, an untypical Derry display followed during which they failed to score for 28 minutes.

By this time the forceful play of the eager and ambitious Donegal team was greatly in evidence – so much so that Derry seemed to be making containment a serious priority.

Anthony Tohill was quiet in midfield and never really responded with any great conviction to the do-or-die efforts of his partner Fergal Doherty. John Gildea was the more impressive of the Donegal midfield duo and it was no surprise when Jim McGuinness was replaced.

Muldoon's opening point in the

Pat Roche in Clones

Donegal 1-9

A McSweeney 1-3, goal from penalty and two pointed frees, C Toye 0-2, B Roper 0-1, J McGuinness 0-1, P McGonigle 0-1, B Devenney 0-1

Derry 0-10

G Diamond 0-4, one free, P Bradley 0-3, two frees, A Tohill 0-1, J McBride 0-1, E Muldoon 0-1

REFEREE: M Collins (Cork).
ATTENDANCE: 4,000 (est).

second minute was finally added to by McBride in the 30th minute. In between Donegal, who persisted with the short passing game, had notched up five well-taken points.

When Derry finally found some sort of cohesion and Donegal began to lose their control Pat Bradley and Gavin Diamond struck for valuable points that left only one between them at half-time – 0-5 to 0-4.

Diamond restarted on a high note in the left corner of the Derry attack and levelled the scores with a brilliant point two minutes into the second half.

The defining moment in the game followed: John Gildea lofted the ball towards the Derry posts, Brendan Devenney rose to fetch possession but was grounded almost on the goal-line as a goal seemed imminent. The referee awarded a penalty, which Eamonn Coleman later contended was a bad decision.

"The guy was going nowhere," he claimed.

Adrian Sweeney sent the spot-kick searing to the back of the net. It was Sweeney's second penalty conversion for his county.

"I think the best approach with penalty kicks is to keep the head down and let fly. Happily, it works for me anyway," he said.

His important spot-kick conversion did Donegal a world of good at a time when Derry's greater experience was beginning to play a part in an unfriendly affair, during which referee Collins was obliged to show 11 yellow and two red cards.



McBride was sidelined in the 50th minute just when Derry had got the deficit down to a point. The way Donegal reacted with renewed vigour whenever Derry threatened to wipe out everything they had worked so hard to achieve, both individually and collectively, was heart-warming, especially for team manager Mickie Moran.

Donegal refused to allow the more experienced Derry men to take over and Adrian Sweeney and Brian Roper soon had restored that one-goal advantage, through sheer ability.

Former Donegal manager Brian McEniff was impressed. "We were hungry to succeed and had the better game plan, more thought and method went into our game," he claimed.

Derry may not have attained their full potential and struggled around the middle, despite the excellence of Fergal Doherty, but they kept chipping away at Donegal leads. Tohill and Bradley reduced the deficit to a single point once more – 1-7 to 0-9 – in the 61st minute but once more Donegal buttressed their slender

advantage with points from Christy Toye and Sweeney.

The goal margin was restored but then a further setback hit the Derry challenge with the sending off of Conleth Gilligan in the 68th minute.

It became easier for the sharp Donegal defence against Derry's depleted attacking force. At the other end, Sean Martin Lockhart had to be stretched off with a broken arm sustained in injury time. He is not expected to be fit for Derry's opening-round match in the qualifiers.

HOW THEY LINED OUT

DONEGAL: 1. T Blake 2. S Carr 3. M Crossan 4. N McGinley 5. R Sweeney 6. B Monaghan 7. K Cassidy 8. J Gildea 9. J McGuinness 10. C Toye 11. M Hegarty 12. B Roper 13. A Sweeney 14. B Devenney 15. P McGonigle.

Subs: C McFadden for McGuinness (59 mins), D Diver for Hegarty (67).

Yellow cards: J Gildea, M Hegarty, B Roper, A Sweeney, B Devenney

DERRY: 1. M Conlon 2. G Doherty 3. N McCusker 4. S M Lockhart 5. C McNally 19. F Crossan 7. G Coleman 8. A Tohill 9. F Doherty 10. C Gilligan 11. J Dougan 12. J McBride 13. P Bradley 14. E Muldoon 15. G Diamond.

Subs: G McGonigle for Dougan (45 mins); B Murray for F Crossan (52), K McGuckin for Lockhart (81).

Yellow cards: SM Lockhart, A Tohill, C Gilligan (2), J McBride, P Bradley.

Red cards: Gilligan and McBride.

Man of the Match

Adrian Sweeney was majestic for Donegal, with his goal the turning point of the game. There were plenty of other contenders, such as Shane Carr, John Gildea, Brian Roper and Brendan Devenney, but Sweeney was in the mood.

The Plumber from Dungloe was in scintillating form - his goal in the George Best category, rounding the 'keeper with his fellow forwards celebrating before the ball even left his foot.

Key Moment

The Sweeney goal was probably the defining moment of the game. Prior to that Donegal were probing and looking dangers, but the early Down goal had put them on the back foot.

From the moment Sweeney found the target Donegal never looked back.

Match statistics:

Derry v Donegal

| DONEGAL | 1st | 2nd | Total |
|------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Goals..... | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Points..... | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Wides..... | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| 45s..... | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Frees awarded | 17 | 12 | 29 |
| Yellow cards ... | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Red cards | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DERRY | 1st | 2nd | Total |
| Goals..... | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Points..... | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Wides..... | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| 45s..... | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Frees awarded | 7 | 14 | 21 |
| Yellow cards ... | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Red cards | 0 | 2 | 2 |

Referee Watch

Roscommon official Gerry Kinneavy had a reasonably good game, but was very fussy about where free kicks and line balls were taken from. Donegal probably benefited from a 'few nudges' which went unpunished, but overall this wasn't a very difficult game to referee.

Armagh's simple solution shatters Donegal's dream

| | |
|---------|------|
| ARMAGH | 1-14 |
| DONEGAL | 1-10 |

DONEGAL'S dreams of winning their first Ulster title since that wild and joyous ride to their historic first All-Ireland SFC victory 10 years ago were doused by a cold dose of reality in the shape of Armagh yesterday.

As a chess game it was fascinating; as an Ulster final it somehow failed to fizzle and while Donegal had reason to blame their own errant shooting and the concession of a most mortifying goal after just two minutes, Armagh always looked like closing it out.

In winning their third senior provincial title in four years, Armagh's pedigree in the modern game is surely beyond question.

Their first title under manager Joe Kernan was not error-free by any means, including a shaky patch mid-way through the second half, but it was then that their big-day experience and cool thinking held firm and there were many examples of the Orange Machine at its counter-attacking best.

It is what American sports gurus like to call the KISS principle, an acronym which stands for 'Keep It Simple, Stupid!' You win defensive possession and get it forward as cleanly, quickly and accurately as possible and let your gifted forwards do the embellishing.

Whether Armagh can go on and win the All-Ireland they so dearly covet is an entirely different question but yesterday, at least, their clinical execution and collective confidence was extremely impressive and essentially the main difference between the sides.

Losing manager Mickey Moran made no secret of his disappointment and put much of the blame on his side's own ropey shooting which included 14 wides and many other shots dropped short.

Their full-forward line of Adrian Sweeney, Brendan Devenney and Brian Roper had scored 5-27 in three preceding games. Yesterday they got 0-8 between them, only four points from play and Devenney, in particular, was well shackled by Enda McNulty.

That, in itself, was a miracle, considering McNulty admitted afterwards that he pulled a hamstring within minutes of the throw-in.

"I told the four or five boys around me that they'd have to cover and they were fantastic," McNulty revealed. "They never left me on my own facing someone one-on-one and that was a huge help."

Therein lies the secret of so much of Armagh's suc-

Cliona FOLEY

cess and let's face it, it's not really a secret. As Kernan said, "they work their socks off for one another" and did so again yesterday in this drift defence which they have made their own.

Donegal will rue the concession of such a 'jammy' goal just two minutes in, when 'keeper Tony Blake advanced to a Marsden shot which had fallen short but was beaten by the bounce,

trying then to punch it clear but only into the path of John McEntee who punched it past him.

To Donegal's credit they bounced back straight away with points from Adrian Sweeney and Paul McGonigle to get a solid start themselves and, throughout the game never let Armagh get a hold in midfield where John Gildea had a marvellous game.

After 15 minutes they were level on 0-4 to 1-1, all of Armagh's scores from McEntee, but were then disastrously hit with an ankle injury to captain Mark Crossan, dispatched to mark Diarmuid Marsden.

Donegal left Crossan in situ until the third quarter, but Armagh quickly spotted that he was vulnerable and began to stretch the defence with their trademark long balls to the wings.

And as Armagh tagged on scores, Donegal's shooting disintegrated in direct proportion. Four of their eight first half-wides came in the last 10 minutes before half-time, including a 20m free from Devenney, and you could see their confidence ebbing as half-time approached, even though the early goal (0-6 to 1-6) was all that separated them.

Their dodgy shooting was still with them on the restart. Devenney missed a 30m free and Sweeney hit another one straight into the hands of a defender while Steven McDonnell and McConville stretched Armagh's lead to five points.

Sweeney, though, kept battling manfully against Justin McNulty and scored two in-a-row to cut the deficit to just three points after 53 minutes when the crowd, interestingly not a full house and hugely dominated by Armagh fans, finally got behind them.

With 10 minutes left Donegal finally got the break they needed when Barry Monaghan, Eamonn Doherty, Michael Hegarty and Devenney combined to find Jimmy McGuinness who squeezed a fantastic shot past Benny Tierney.

But this was where Armagh's vast experience told. Donegal came at them again and shot another wide, but still they stayed calm and immediately swept upfield and when Oisín McConville beat Damien Diver with a lovely angled point to extend their lead to three, the sight of the Donegal defender thumping the ground in

frustration was a telling one.

With bodies behind the ball and forwards like McConville and McDonnell they can make the most of anything that comes their way and John McEntee's huge, swift deliveries were a big factor, as was the lethal second half-form of McDonnell and also young Ronan Clarke, the 19-year-old Queens student who really came of age yesterday, with three excellent points from play.

SCORERS — Armagh: O McConville 0-5 (3f), J McEntee 1-1, R Clarke and S Donnelly 0-3 each, D Marsden and A O'Rourke 0-1 each. Donegal: A Sweeney 0-4 (2f), J McGuinness 1-0, B Devenney 0-3 (2f), C Toye 0-2, P McGonigle 0-1.

ARMAGH — B Tierney 8; F Bellew 8, E McNulty 8, J McNulty 9; A O'Rourke 8, K McGeeney (Capt) 9, K Hughes 7; J Toal 6, P McGrane 8; P McKeever 6; J McEntee 9, O McConville 9; S McDonnell 8, R Clarke 8, D Marsden 7. **Subs:** B O'Hagan 7 for McKeever (29 mins), P Loughran 6 for Toal (52). **Booked:** J Toal (15 mins), E McNulty (19).

DONEGAL — T Blake 7; M Crossan (Capt) 7, S Carr 6, N McGinley 7; R Sweeney 6, B Monaghan 7, K Cassidy 7; J Gildea 9, J McGuinness 7; C Toye 7, M Hegarty 8, P McGonigle 6; A Sweeney 9, B Devenney 7, B Roper 6. **Subs:** D Diver 6 for Carr (31 mins), E Doherty 6 for Crossan (49), C McFadden 7 for Toye (49), K Rafferty 6 for McGonigle (55), B Boyle 7 for Roper (63). **Booked:** B Roper (36 mins), J Gildea (42), K Cassidy (54).

REFEREE — S McCormack (Meath).

Attendance — 30,219.

MAN OF THE MATCH

John McEntee (Armagh)

THERE brilliant second halves from Steven McDonnell and Ronan Clarke, and McGeeney and McConville were outstanding, but John McEntee, not just for his crucial early scores, but for his huge long kicks, delivered with speed and accuracy, narrowly pips them.



BIG MATCH STATISTICS

| | ARMAGH | | | DONEGAL | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| | 1st Half | 2nd Half | Total | 1st Half | 2nd Half | Total |
| Goals | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Points | 6 | 8 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Wides | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| Frees For | 8 | 9 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 26 |
| Frees Against | 11 | 15 | 26 | 8 | 9 | 17 |
| 45s | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Line-balls | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Yellow Cards | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Red Cards | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

MOVE OF THE MATCH

Like all counter-attacking teams, accurate passing is the key to Armagh's attack and in the dying minutes they showed how devastating they can be when McGeeney found Diarmuid Marsden with a lovely diagonal ball and he immediately transferred it on the opposite diagonal to Ronan Clarke who flicked it over.

MISS OF THE MATCH

TO be honest there were a plethora of contenders, mostly from Donegal, but ironically the worst miss came from Armagh's Steven McDonnell 18 minutes into the second half when he won a great ball and momentarily lost his new marker Eamonn Doherty, but shot wide of the goal from point-blank range.

Orchard eyes on Sam

Cliona Foley

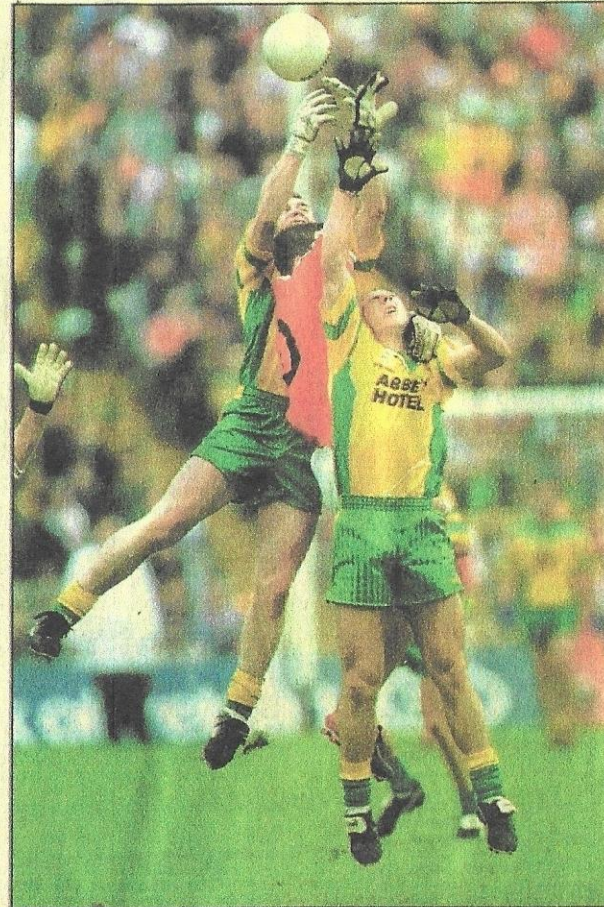
WINNING their third Ulster title in the last four years was a delight, but opponents beware, it is obviously not the summit of Armagh's ambitions this season.

Man after Armagh man stressed that the All-Ireland is the one they desperately desire after so many disappointments in recent years.

"This is only a stepping stone, the All-Ireland is our real goal," said teak-tough centre-forward John McEntee. "We've had opportunities in recent years, Meath were too strong for us the first year and Galway were better than us last year, but losing to Kerry when we had so many opportunities, I don't want to have that sick feeling again."

Captain fantastic Kieran McGeeney concurred, concentrating on the questions even though a fan wearing an Ian Paisley mask, an unlikely feature at a GAA match, tried to distract him.

"It's great to win, but obviously the job isn't done yet," the defensive star said. "We're under no illusions, we've played a good team, they've one of the best full-forward lines in the country, but this is not the Cup I want to lift, there's three more games ahead if we're to go all the way and every team left in it, well, it's going to be dog-eat-dog."



The Donegal pair, John Gildea and Kevin Cassidy (front), contest possession with Armagh's Barry O'Hagan.

McGeeney paid special tribute to his teammates and the amount of covering everyone did to close down

Donegal's lethal forwards. "Enda (McEntee) got injured very early on and a lesser man would have gone

off, but it meant we all had to work harder and people like John McEntee and John Toal were picking up my man at times."

McNulty himself said he never felt they'd be beaten, even when Donegal got their goal with 10 minutes left.

"Yeah we never panicked. We went up and scored again quickly and once we had those three or four points up we looked clear."

Famous Crossmaglen mentor Joe Kernan found himself in a new role, godfather to an Ulster-winning county side and the fanatical hordes of fans which surround them and he felt that their experience, above all, was what stood to them.

"Lesser sides would have flickered when they got the goal, but these lads went up and got two or three scores, they know how to do that and their experience here on big days was vital for that," their delighted boss said.

But Donegal manager Mickey Moran said they were still in contention.

"We had opportunities there and dominated possession, we just didn't convert it into scores," he admitted.

"But they were just holding on in the end which means we weren't far away and we still have a chance, another day which we'll definitely be taking."

Donegal's sparkling show cuts Royals' power supply

| | |
|---------|------|
| DONEGAL | 1-13 |
| MEATH | 0-14 |

THE Royal County brought their full range of survival techniques to Croke Park yesterday, only to find that they weren't anywhere near scary enough to intimidate a Donegal team which embellished their undoubted skills with a thick layer of maturity and resolve.

Those are very impressive qualities to take into the All-Ireland quarter finals on the weekend after next and will leave eventual opponents, Cork, Dublin or Galway anxiously studying the video in an effort to find ways of countering a game plan which Meath never quite figured out.

Despite that, Meath's in-built defiance, which was underpinned by a high workrate, put them in a position to win the game when they cut a five point deficit to one with four minutes remaining.

It was a typical Meath rally and seemed likely to rescue them once again but this time they found themselves confronted by a Donegal team which showed a lot more substance than their Ulster final performance suggested.

Their nerve never failed them, not even when Brendan Devenney missed a 30-metre free in the 69th minute at a time when they were clinging to a one point lead.

It could have been costly but Donegal's response was swift and decisive as straight away they regained possession from a misdirected kick-out and Michael Hegarty scooted through to punch over a point before being flattened by Meath goalkeeper, Cormac Sullivan.

He became the eighth Meath player to be booked (three Donegal men were also yellow-carded) in a niggly encounter which Cork referee Michael Collins could not have enjoyed.

He had a trouble-free run in the Dublin-Kildare game a week earlier but there were far more destructive tendencies at work this time.

Donegal won the free count, 30-17, and while Meath fans were unhappy afterwards with Collins' performance, they would have to acknowledge that some of their players were far too inclined to foul as a first rather than a last resort.

But then, players are always more likely to foul when they are under extreme pressure, a condition which Meath endured



Martin
BREHENY

for long stretches yesterday. The referee wasn't nearly as assertive as in the Leinster final and there were times in the second half when the exchanges came very close to overheating into something serious.

Still, it would be unfair to exaggerate the negative aspects because there were also plenty of positives, not

least the expansive game which Donegal played for so long. And the dogged recovery by Meath when they looked in dire trouble as they trailed by 1-9 to 0-7 after 47 minutes is to be commended.

Meath's clawback resulted from their improved share of the mid-field possession where Nigel Crawford powered into the game.

Nigel Nestor, who had switched from defence, following Trevor Giles' relocation to centre back after half-time, also made an impact while Ollie Murphy began to look more menacing in the corner.

Ultimately, Meath came very close to pulling off another last-minute win when Donal Curtis' flick flew just wide of the Donegal goal deep in injury time.

But, in truth, it would have been horribly unfair

on Mickey Moran and his squad if they had been caught on the line.

Moran's tactic of playing corner-forward Paul McGonigle around mid-field from the start was extremely important in setting the agenda.

McGonigle did a great job in a difficult role while the two-man full-forward line of Adrian Sweeney and Brendan Devenney stretched the Meath cover to the limit.

Darren Fay, who read the angles intelligently, coped reasonably well with the Devenney threat but Mark O'Reilly struggled with Sweeney, who kicked 0-4 (three from play).

Sweeney's anticipation took him to the point of action with consistent regularity, making life difficult for O'Reilly who had to chase Sweeney across the line all day.

He hung on with typical

courage but with the half-back line also under pressure, it was a trying afternoon for the Meath defence.

Donegal led by 0-5 to 0-3 after 26 minutes before a quick Meath blitz yielded three points in less than three minutes.

It was vintage Meath but, as has been the norm all season, they switched off just as quickly as they had cranked up and found themselves in arrears.

Admittedly, there was a degree of luck attached to Donegal's goal in the 31st minute. Cormac Murphy seemed to have tidied up but didn't secure possession and Devenney poked the ball to Christy Toye who fired home.

Toye was a substantial presence in Donegal's more progressive second half work, as were his colleagues, Michael Hegarty and Brian Roper.

Donegal led by 1-7 to 0-6 at half-time and extended the lead to five points 12 minutes into the second half.

They lost the next 16 minutes by 0-6 to 0-2 but retained a deep sense of conviction this was going to be their day and while they had some worrying moments near the end, they always looked like they believed they would win.

A positive mindset is absolutely vital against Meath who are expert at disguising their shortcomings before delivering the deadly sting.

They did it against Louth a few weeks ago and must have thought they could pull off another survival special when they came within a point of Donegal late on but it wasn't to be.

Donegal's boat has risen so fast that they are now able to withstand Meath's

heaviest storms although it must be acknowledged that Meath are no longer able to generate the grinding power of previous years. That's a worrying thought as they end their 2002 championship bid.

SCORERS — Donegal: C Toye 1-1, B Devenney 0-5 (5f), A Sweeney 0-4 (1f), J McGuinness, B Roper, M Hegarty 0-1 each. Meath: G Geraghty, O Murphy, N Crawford, T Giles (1f, 1'45"), R Kealy 0-2 (1f) each, A Kenny, N Nestor, J Cullinane, D Curtis 0-1 each.

TEAMS AND RATINGS

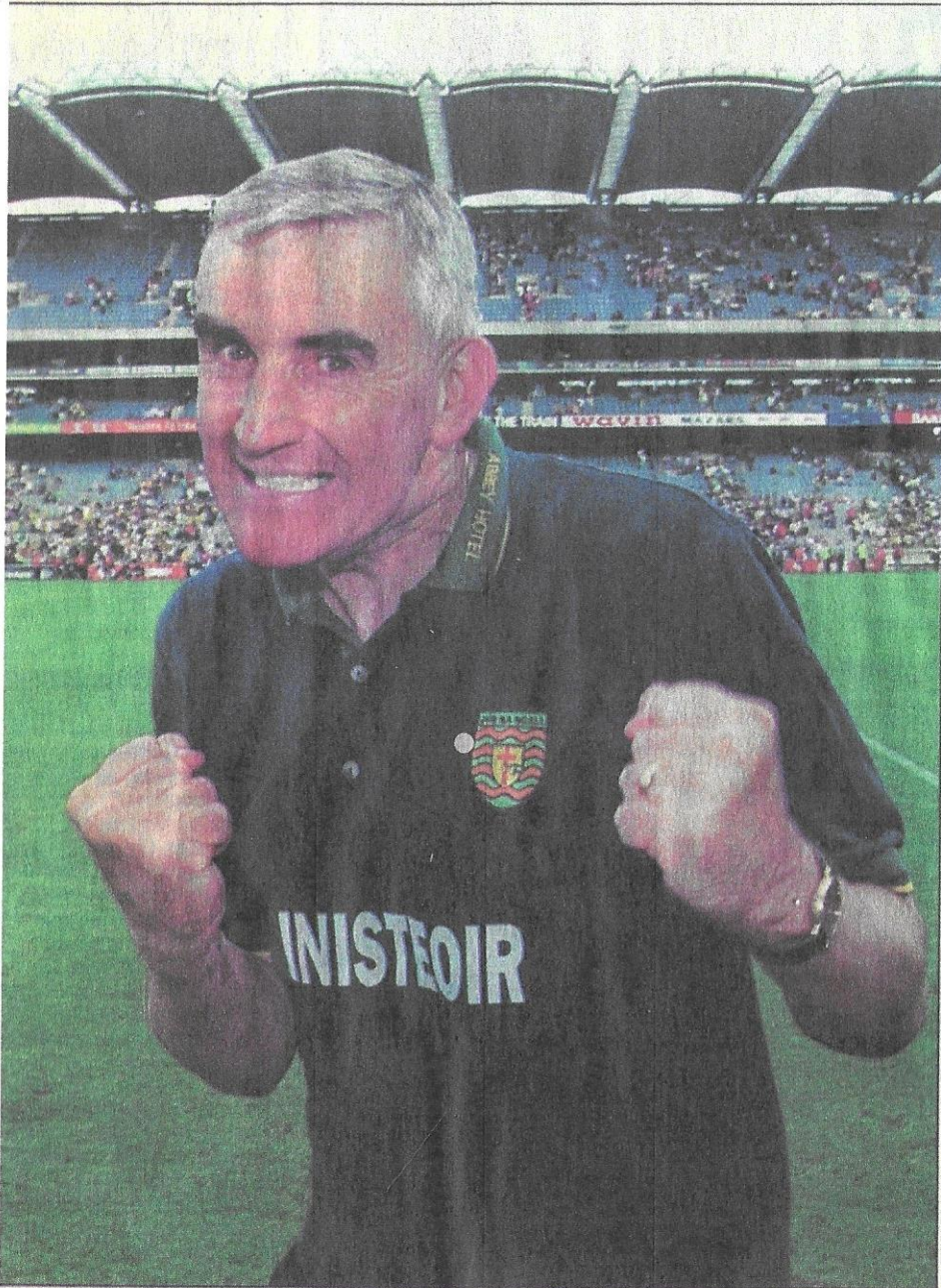
DONEGAL — T Blake 7; S Carr 7; E Doherty 8, N McGinley 7; R Sweeney 8, B Monaghan 7, K Cassidy 7; J Gildea 8, J McGuinness 7; C Toye 8, M Hegarty 7, B Roper 7; A Sweeney 9; B Devenney 7, P McGonigle 9. **Subs:** D Diver for Toye (68). **Booked:** J Gildea (21), A Sweeney (34), B Roper (39).

MEATH — C Sullivan 6; M O'Reilly 6, D Fay 8, C Murphy 5; P Shankey 6, N Nestor 7, P Reynolds 6; N Crawford 8, J Cullinane 7; E Kelly 6, A Kenny 6, T Giles 6; O Murphy 7, G Geraghty 7, R Kealy 6. **Subs:** D Crimmins 6 for C Murphy (ht), D Curtis 6 for Shankey (46), S Kenny 6 for A Kenny (46). **Booked:** N Nestor (10), J Cullinane (22), M O'Reilly (25), P Shankey (39), G Geraghty (46), S Kenny (56), D Crimmins (60), C Sullivan (69).

REF — M Collins (Cork)

Attendance: 43,682

Irish Independent
Monday, 22 July, 2002



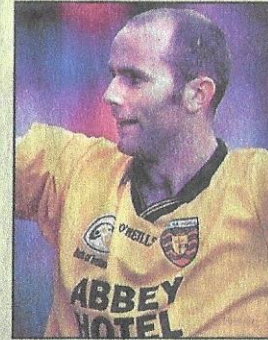
Donegal manager Mickey Moran celebrates his team's victory after the final whistle of yesterday's clash against Meath. Picture: Ray McManus / Sportsfile

Bank of Ireland Football Championship

MAN OF THE MATCH

PAUL MCGONIGLE
(Donegal)

CORNER-forward
McGonigle was sent on his travels right from the start, operating mostly around midfield. It can be a difficult role to play but he did it expertly, especially in the first half when he picked up lots of possession and used it intelligently.



BIG MATCH STATISTICS

| | DONEGAL | | | MEATH | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| | 1st Half | 2nd Half | Total | 1st Half | 2nd Half | Total |
| Goals | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Points | 7 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| Wides | 3 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 11 |
| Frees For | 18 | 12 | 30 | 10 | 7 | 17 |
| Frees Against | 10 | 7 | 17 | 18 | 12 | 30 |
| 45s | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Line-balls | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Yellow Cards | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Red Cards | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

MOVE OF THE MATCH

THE approach work for Donegal's 12th point in the 63rd minute was as impressive as it was important. Meath had cut the deficit to a point so Donegal needed an immediate response. They worked the ball upfield to Brian Roper who scored.

MISS OF THE MATCH

IT had no impact in the end but if Meath had completed their recovery bid, Donegal's Brendan Devenney would have been furious over missing a 30-metre free in the 69th minute when his side were defending a one-point lead.

WHAT THEY SAID



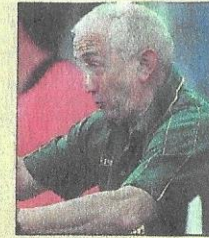
MICKY MORAN
(Donegal Manager)

"WE approached this match with a motto of no fuss. We had no big speeches and no big things planned. We went out very calm, but very controlled. We learned our lesson from the Armagh game and just went out to enjoy ourselves today. We showed enterprising football in the first half and that calmness with control got us through."



MICHAEL HEGARTY
(Donegal captain)

"IT'S been the hardest week of my life. I know my mother is up there smiling down on me today. It hasn't been easy, but the lads have given me great support and that's what you need. It was a nice honour to captain the team. We've a lot of work to do but we'll take encouragement from this."



SEAN BOYLAN
(Meath Manager)

"THEY were probably a little fresher. It's hard to do it all the time. After losing to Dublin we had to dig deep to get ourselves back to this stage. We were never really firing on all cylinders this year. It can be difficult to do that all the time particularly when you've been at or near the top for a long time the way the lads have been."



BRENDAN DEVENNEY
(Donegal)

"THE championship is wide open now, you saw today that any team can beat another. No-one gave us a prayer coming here. It was Meath, Meath, Meath. We were confident coming here though. We've righted the wrongs of the Armagh match and hopefully we can continue playing good football."

Tuesday, August 6, 2002

Donegal bounce back from two Cosgrove goals

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| DONEGAL | 0-14 |
| DUBLIN | 2-8 |

AFTER being level on no fewer than eight occasions in a fascinating encounter, it was entirely appropriate that Donegal and Dublin should leave Croke Park yesterday evening with their Bank of Ireland football quarter-final still unresolved.

It was a clash which had a replay emblazoned across it from a long way out, yet when Dublin struck for home with a Ray Cosgrove goal to go three points clear in the 64th minute, it presented Donegal with the ultimate challenge to their determination and fortitude.

Their response was quick and powerful as they queued up to thrust their hands into the hottest fires in an effort to rescue the situation.

Paul McGonigle's 66th minute point started the process and it was completed with detailed precision by Adrian Sweeney who lofted over points in the 70th and 71st minutes.

It was scarcely any surprise that Sweeney emerged as Donegal's saviour as he had been their most influential attacker all afternoon, subjecting Dublin captain Coman Goggins to a terrible ordeal in the hot sunshine.

Sweeney kicked five points from play and wasted very little possession, but he will be disappointed with his failure to point a close range free just before half-time. In such a tight game, every point was absolutely crucial which made Sweeney's miss all the more significant.

Still, Donegal fans will forgive him as they reflect on his immense contribution to a game which produced some of the highest tension from the four quarter-finals.



**Martin
BREHENY**

Both sides were unusually slow to rev up to cruising speed, but once Shane Ryan kicked the game's first point in the 12th minute, it took on a whole new pace and intensity.

Curiously, both sides had lost their centre-backs to injury by the 10th minute. Donegal's Barry Monaghan limped off in the third minute, while Paul Casey, who was switched to No 6 by Dublin in a pre-match re-alignment, was forced out seven minutes later.

Donegal unleashed a bountiful spurt to open up a two point lead after 16 minutes, but were quickly re-united with reality when Ray Cosgrove swept home Dublin's first goal 40 seconds later. He would later add a second to take his goal tally to five in his last three championship games.

Dublin led by 1-4 to 0-6 at the interval, but once Donegal equalised two minutes into the second half it launched an enthralling period of see-saw action, with points being swapped on a regular basis to leave it all square (1-8 to 0-11) by the 63rd minute.

A minute later, Raymond Sweeney was caught in possession about 40 metres from the Donegal goal and Dublin exploited the error, setting up Cosgrove for his second goal.

A semi-final clash with

Armagh or Sligo beckoned for the Dubs but, typical of their defiant approach all day, Donegal simply got back down to work and were eventually rewarded with a second chance.

Dublin will feel that they allowed a glorious opportunity to escape them and, in truth, they probably did. A more experienced team would have closed the shutters once they pulled three points clear so late on, even if that involved deliberately killing Donegal's raids at source.

Instead, Dublin allowed Donegal to run at them, using crisp handpass interchanges and, with the likes of Sweeney around, danger lurked every time they crossed the half-way line.

Still, Dublin had a chance to consolidate their lead prior to Sweeney's late double strike, but Jason Sherlock fired wide from a very scoreable position.

Earlier, Dublin corner-forward John McNally had been off target with three placed balls which proved extremely costly.

Alan Brogan, Ray Cosgrove and Shane Ryan were all sharp and industrious going forward, but things rarely went Colin Moran's way and he was replaced after 50 minutes.

Ciaran Whelan delivered a massive midfield performance, which was just as well for Dublin as John Gildea was at his industrious best for Donegal, ranging all over the field in search

of work and responsibility.

Michael Hegarty was equally diligent at centre-forward while Brendan Devenney showed for everything but didn't score from play. However, he was a source of huge distraction amid a Dublin defence which were positively traumatised by Sweeney's magic.

Devenney tested Stephen Cluxton in the 42nd minute, but the young Dublin 'keeper was equal to the challenge, making a smart save, only to see Sweeney point from the rebound.

Later on, Donegal 'keeper Tony Blake made a brave stop from Sherlock, but he could do nothing about Cosgrove's well finished efforts.

Cosgrove's goal instincts have emerged as one of the defining qualities of Dublin's season, but they won't be happy with such a meagre points tally.

In fairness, the Donegal defence marked tightly and closely most of the time, with Shane Carr, Kevin Cassidy, Raymond Sweeney and substitute Damien Diver maintaining a disciplined line which Dublin found difficult to breach.

Paddy Christie, Peadar Andrews and Johnny Magee were equally brave and committed in the Dublin defence, but not even their constant covering could close off all the routes for such an instinctive finisher as Sweeney.

SCORERS — Donegal: A Sweeney 0-5, B Devenney 0-4 (4f), D Diver 0-2, J Gildea, P McGonigle, J McGuinness (45') 0-1 each. **Dublin:** R Cosgrove 2-2 (2f), S Ryan, S Connell, A Brogan, C Whelan, D Magee, J McNally 0-1 each.

TEAMS AND RATINGS —

DONEGAL — T Blake 8; S Carr 8, E Doherty 7, N McGinley 6; R Sweeney 7, B Monaghan (not on long enough for a rating), K Cassidy 8; J Gildea 8, J McGuinness 7; C Toye 5, M Hegarty 8, B Roper 6; A Sweeney 9, B Devenney 7, P McGonigle 7. **Subs:** D Diver 8 for Monaghan (3), B McLaughlin 6 for Roper (55), K Rafferty for Toye (64), B Boyle for McGuinness (65).

DUBLIN — S Cluxton 8; J Magee 7, P Christie 7, C Goggins 5; P Andrews 8, B Casey (not on long enough for a rating), B Cahill 7; C Whelan 9, D Homan 6; C Moran 5, S Ryan 8, S Connell 7; A Brogan 8, R Cosgrove 9, J McNally 7. **Subs:** D Magee 7 for Casey (10), D Farrell 7 for Connell (48), J Sherlock 6 for Moran (50), S Connell for Ryan (65), K Darcy for Homan (69).

REF — G Kinneavy (Roscommon)

ATTENDANCE — 77,298

Sweeney halts

Dubs' surge



PAUL MCGONIGLE
(Donegal midfielder)

"WE showed great character to come back and deserved another run at it. At half-time we were so upset because we hadn't played our own game but we wouldn't feel there's anything to scare us the next day. This is it, this is the hub of it, you want to play here though playing in front of the Hill is shocking enough!"

Cliona Foley

Bank of Ireland
Football Championship

MAN OF THE MATCH

Adrian Sweeney

RAY Cosgrove and Ciaran Whelan were strong candidates, but the honour goes to Donegal corner-forward, Adrian Sweeney who scored five excellent points, including the final two. His touch, positioning and finishing were a constant source of worry for Dublin.



BIG MATCH STATISTICS

| | DONEGAL | | | DUBLIN | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| | 1st Half | 2nd Half | Total | 1st Half | 2nd Half | Total |
| Goals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Points | 6 | 8 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Wides | 4 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Frees For | 15 | 12 | 27 | 9 | 10 | 19 |
| Frees Against | 9 | 10 | 19 | 15 | 12 | 27 |
| 45s | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Line-balls | 3 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Yellow Cards | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Red Cards | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

MOVE OF MATCH

Donegal's link play was first class at times and was typified by the build-up to their third point in the 16th minute. Michael Hegarty fed Jim McGuinness who transferred to Adrian Sweeney and the finish was as slick as the approach work.

MISS OF THE MATCH

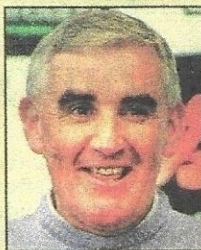
EVEN Adrian Sweeney can fall prey to the odd careless error as he showed just before half-time. Normally so accurate with the boot, he dragged a close range free wide of the Dublin posts much to the dismay of the travelling army of Donegal fans.

WHAT THEY SAID



PAUL CAFFREY
(Dublin selector)

"WE'RE disappointed because we were three points up and felt we were in with a great chance but we didn't have the composure in the last five minutes. After the second goal, we had two chances but we never got the insurance point we needed. I don't want to talk about the ref, he has his job to do and calls it as it is."



MICKY MORAN
(Donegal manager)

"WE live to fight another day and we're just delighted, there's a lot of things we have to work on. I told them (at half-time) we were playing like club footballers. We were giving the ball away, but they're a young, emerging team and it's a long way from relegation fodder to nearly making the All-Ireland semi-finals."



RAY COSGROVE
(Dublin goalscorer)

"I JUST seem to be in the right place at the right time. The first one (goal), the ball came in high, I was competing with Eamonn Doherty, turned, got inside 10 to 15 yards out, pulled the trigger and Blake went to the wrong side. The second one, well Jason put it on a plate for me, I just had to slot it past the keeper and couldn't miss."

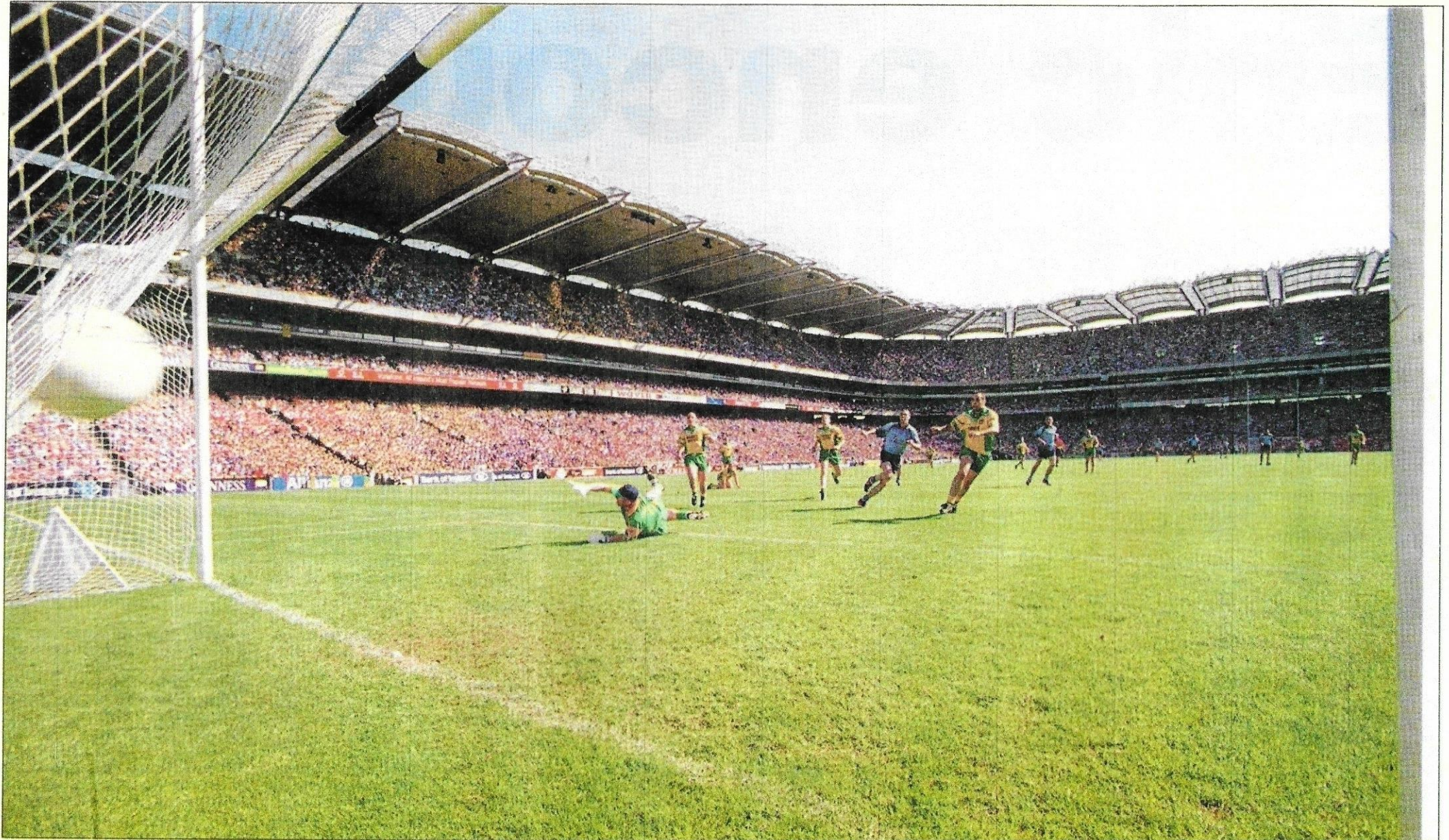


ADRIAN SWEENEY
(Donegal top-scorer)

"WE thoroughly deserved a draw. We gave away two soft goals and when they got the second one I thought 'that's it, there's no way back' but the boys battled well. When we were within striking distance at half-time we thought Dublin mightn't have the bottle and had they not got that goal I think we would have won."



All-Ireland Football Quarter Final Special - Donegal v. Dublin



Alan Brogan, Dublin, nets the second goal with Tony Blake stranded.

Donegal have the momentum

SIX teams are left in pursuit now for the biggest prize in Irish sport, and Dublin and Donegal are no more or less certain of their chances than Armagh, Sligo, Kerry and Cork. All this makes for a mouth-watering conclusion to this year's All-Ireland football championship.

But like the other four teams still in there, Dublin and Donegal both have hopes now of going all the way. It's going to be the team that shows the most improvement from now on that gets there.

It's tricky, however, to predict who is the more capable of stepping up a gear in this evening's replay. Donegal will definitely have the greater momentum after coming from three points down in the last few minutes of the drawn game. Mickey Moran has also placed a lot of emphasis on mental preparation this year, and there's no doubting the influence that has had on his team.

Donegal have kept calm in tight situations. Ray Cosgrove's two goals the last day came at vital times for Dublin, yet Donegal clawed their way back each time with well-taken points.

There have been times, too, when Donegal have lost crucial players, like Mark Crossan and Barry Monaghan. The perception



John O'Mahony
Football analyst

was that their bench wasn't as strong as other big teams but Damien Diver and Eamonn Doherty have done very well as replacements, especially Diver, who was exceptional the last day against Dublin.

Donegal also have a simple and effective game plan. Their half forwards drop back along with John Gildea and Paul McGonigle, and they use Adrian Sweeney and Brendan Devenney as highly effective twin strikers. Michael Hegarty is also left to play a sort of lone role, pulling the strings in the half-forward line. So the long ball into Sweeney and Devenney is a change from the short game played by Donegal in the past.

Yet under Tommy Lyons, Dublin have also been playing a more simple game plan, getting the ball into their inside forwards as quickly as possible. It's a tactic that has reaped a rich harvest so far, particularly with the super strikes from Cosgrove and Alan Brogan.

The art of goal scoring is

perceived to be in decline in recent years. Cosgrove and Brogan have certainly bucked that trend. Cosgrove's placement of goals this season, low and out of the goalkeepers reach, have been calmness personified and I think Brogan's strike against Kildare was magical.

And I think Cosgrove has repaid a hundred fold the confidence shown in him by the management. He was only a bit-part player in the previous regime – and performed very much like that – but his current confidence and form illustrates again the importance of mental approach in sport. He may not be a tremendous ball winner but he's a tremendous finisher.

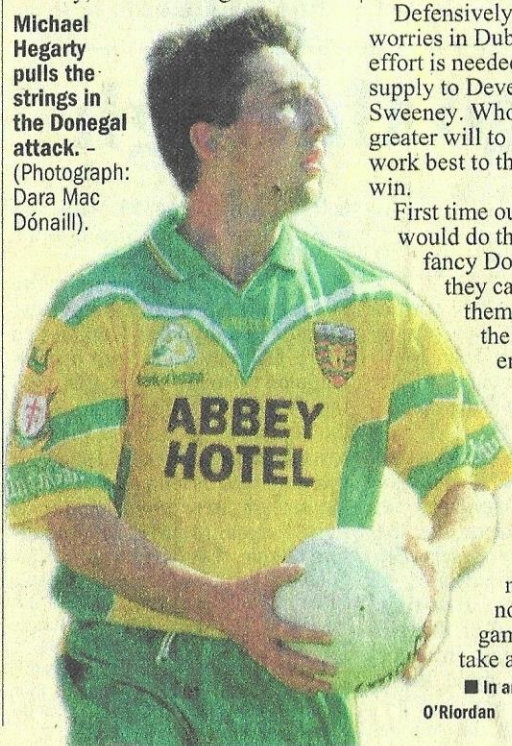
In looking at the areas where teams can improve, and tip the balance in their favour, Donegal need to shut out that goalscoring threat in the Dublin attack. Both Dublin goals the last day initially came from a mix-up in the Donegal defence and that's one thing they'll want to get right.

Around the middle they saw Jim McGuinness fade a little the last day and 70 minutes of intensity from him would be a huge boost to Donegal. Also a greater presence in the half-forward line from Brian Roper and Chris Toyne would mean greater support for their

up-front players, and with that a better attacking game from Donegal.

Dublin have gone for a lot more changes from the last day – indicating that midfield and the half forwards need more of a presence. Certainly Donegal held most of the sway at midfield the last day, and it was significant

Michael Hegarty pulls the strings in the Donegal attack. –
(Photograph: Dara Mac Dónaill).



that the Dublin half-forward line was eventually replaced.

Dessie Farrell has obviously been performing very well in training, though Shane Ryan is a unlucky to miss out because his work-rate is always high. Darren Magee has done well any day he has come on and deserves the nod this time over Darren Homan.

Defensively there are still worries in Dublin and a lot of effort is needed to cut down the supply to Devenney and Sweeney. Whoever shows the greater will to lift their game and work best to their strengths will win.

First time out I thought Dublin would do that, but this time I fancy Donegal, especially if they can score a goal themselves and shut out the threat at the other end.

Dublin do have Tommy Lyons back on the sidelines and that's a huge boost to them, but they're asking themselves a few more questions now and in a tight game Donegal can take advantage of that.

■ In an interview with Ian

O'Riordan

| | |
|---------|------|
| DUBLIN | 1-14 |
| DONEGAL | 0-7 |

Martin Breheny

AN OMINOUS presence is stalking the football landscape and it's growing more bold by the week.

While it's important to wrap Dublin's easy victory in Saturday's Bank of Ireland quarter-final replay in context, nobody can deny that they are now a powerfully motivated force who are discovering new and deeper vaults in their inner strength. They literally sprinted into their first All-Ireland semi-final since 1995, leaving Donegal shuffling in their embarrassment.

And that's where context must be applied. This was, quite simply, a shockingly inept performance by Donegal, one which would have made them relatively easy prey for at least eight other counties. Physically suspect and mentally brittle, the conviction tanks emptied rapidly, leaving them with a miserable return of 0-7, their lowest in the championship since the 1993 Ulster final.

They had an excuse that day as the clash with Derry took place on an unplayable Clones pitch after a three-hour cloud burst. In contrast, the sun shone on Saturday, sending the Croke Park temperature soaring to 72 degrees. Even that was cool, compared with the scorching pace and intensity Dublin injected into the game.

Donegal hung on grimly for 26 energy-sapping minutes where the standard of shooting was extremely poor but even before Ray Cosgrove booted home Dublin's goal, there were clear indications of serious trouble for Mickey Moran's crew as they reverted to the worst excesses of the short-passing game.

An example. Trailing 0-3 to 0-2 after 19 minutes, Donegal began an offensive from their own endline. At least that was the intention but, 20 seconds and seven passes later, they were still inside their own 45-metre line when Dublin's tackling tenacity won the ball back.

It was a deeply significant moment, underlining the vast difference of style and attitude between the sides. Dublin tied the long and short game neatly together with a relentless work ethic which saw forwards tackle like defenders, who were also expected to be part of the creative package.

There was an early warning for Donegal when Alan Brogan darted in from the left in the ninth minute and cracked a shot off the crossbar but there was no escape in the 26th minute when Dessie Farrell fed Ray Cosgrove, who flashed in his sixth goal from his last four championship outings.

Cosgrove's instinct for goal has been hugely significant for Dublin in a season where he has scored a grand total of 6-17 in five games. There is a swaggering confidence about his goal strikes while his positioning and general awareness are also effective lock-pickers in the wide open spaces of Croke Park.

Cosgrove's goal sense has made him a big Hill 16

favourite but not even he could compare with Ciaran Whelan when it came to the honours list on Saturday. Whelan has been something of a touchstone for Dublin frustrations over the past few years as his performance graph rose and fell in uneven lines. However, he cuts an invigorating sight this season, not least on Saturday when he decorated a man-of-the-match performance with four excellent points.

Solidly supported by Darren Magee, he was a totally dominant figure at midfield where Donegal pair, Jim McGuinness and John Gildea, were replaced in the second half. Gildea appeared to be carrying a leg injury which may have accounted for his ineffective performance but it was just one of those days for McGuinness who never switched on to the tempo of the occasion.

The same applied to several of Donegal's other central figures, including the two-man full-forward line of Brendan Devenney and Adrian Sweeney.

Sweeney, who was devastatingly effective in the drawn game, was well beaten by a born-again Coman Goggins, while Paddy Christie popped Devenney into his pocket early on and locked him there for the whole evening.

Brian Roper battled hard but was betrayed by his touch while Michael Hegarty had his moments but the sad reality for Donegal was that their starting forward line scored just 0-3 from play between them. Admittedly, the service was poor ahead of a beaten midfield but even when Donegal got into attacking mode, they were corralled into the tightest pens by Goggins, Christie and co.

Meanwhile, at the other end Senan Connell, who had his best game for a long time, Cosgrove and Brogan used guile and pace to stretch the Donegal defence and while Farrell may not be the influential figure of old, his vision and experience fitted in neatly right through the first half.

Dublin led by 1-6 to 0-3 at half-time, making it imperative for Donegal to achieve an early second-half breakthrough. Instead, Adrian Sweeney fired a careless ball across field in the first minute which was swept away by Paul Casey. It typified Donegal's day which got progressively worse and ended with Devenney kicking a 13-metre free wide in the 66th minute.

SCORERS — Dublin: R Cosgrove 1-3 (2f), C Whelan 0-4, S Connell, A Brogan 0-2 each, J Magee, J McNally, P Christie (45) 0-1 each. Donegal: A Sweeney (1f), B Devenney (1f) 0-2 each, B Roper, K Rafferty, M Hegarty (45) 0-1 each.

DUBLIN — S Cluxton 8; J Magee 8, P Christie 9, C Goggins 9; P Andrews 8, P Casey 8, B Cahill 7; C Whelan 9, D Magee 7; C Moran 5, J McNally 7, S Connell 9; A Brogan 8, R Cosgrove 8, D Farrell 7. **Subs:** J Sherlock 7 for Farrell (42), S Ryan 8 for Moran (52), P Curran for McNally (64), D Homan for D Magee (66), E Bennis for Connell (67). **Booked:** C Moran (14), D Farrell (15).

DONEGAL — T Blake 6; S Carr 7, E Doherty 7, N McGinley 6; D Diver 6, R Sweeney 6, K Cassidy 7; J Gildea 5, J McGuinness 4; C Toye 5, M Hegarty 6, B Roper 6; A Sweeney 5, B Devenney 5, P McGonigle 7. **Subs:** K Rafferty 6 for McGuinness (38), B Boyle 7 for Gildea (43), C McFadden 6 for Toye (51), R Kavanagh 6 for Roper (57), C Dunne for McFadden (63). **Booked:** E Doherty (27), B Devenney (69).

REF — P McEnaney (Monaghan)
Attendance: 79,057

Moran's thumbs up to Dubs

Paddy Hickey

DONEGAL manager Mickey Moran has given dynamic Dublin a massive vote of confidence in their quest for the All-Ireland title.

After his side's thrashing by the rejuvenated Dubs in Saturday's quarter-final, Moran said Tommy Lyons charges can go all the way.

"I think on their outstanding display today that Dublin are definitely capable of going all the way," said Moran. "I thought they were really awesome and it would be very difficult to find a weak line. They were so solid all over the field.

"The defence improved immeasurably from the drawn game and they gave our forwards very little room or time to shoot for scores, or to create openings.

"If they didn't succeed in dispossessing our forwards, they regularly got a block in, and nearly always another Dublin back was on hand to tidy up the situation. And the Dublin forwards constantly put our backs under huge pressure when they were in possession, and, as a result, it was very difficult for us to start counter-attacks out of defence.

"At midfield, Ciaran Whelan provided Dublin with a massive presence. His work-rate was fantastic, he was excellent in the air, and he scored three inspirational points in the first half.

"But my man-of-the-match was the Dublin goalkeeper Stephen Cluxton. I thought that he had a fantastic game. He was always incredibly quick to read dangerous situations, and he prevented two goals by his quickness off his line. His distribution of the ball to his team-mates was always very accurate and intelligent, and many promising Dublin movements started with the goalkeeper."

Lyons' stirring start as Dubs taste victory

| | |
|---------|------|
| DUBLIN | 2-10 |
| DONEGAL | 0-14 |

FOR Tommy Lyons, three months of "frustration" are over and the real stuff has begun with a winning start at Parnell Park and a suggestion of more to come from a radically revamped Dublin.

They had to survive a few second-half wobbles, but two goals coming at pivotal moments helped secure a winning start for Lyons in Division 1A.

Alan Brogan clinically dispatched the first goal early after 38 minutes, just after Donegal had drawn level and were looking to press home the alleged advantage of a stiff breeze.

Having surged five points clear, Dublin then sat back and admired as Brendan Devenney threatened to turn this lively tussle into a one-man cabaret.

Four points on the trot brought Donegal to within a point.

But with the game on a knife-edge, Eoin Bennis and Ray Cosgrove cut a large hole through the Donegal defence and set up substitute Johnny Magee for the most routine of goal-line tap-ins.

Four points up and 56 minutes on the clock, it wasn't game over but Donegal never quite recovered as Dublin held on for a deserved two-point triumph.

Afterwards, Lyons saluted his Dublin colts for showing



FRANK
ROCHE

"enormous promise. To do that against Donegal in your first league game is a great achievement."

Despite the flimsy margin, his opposite number was offering no excuses.

"To be brutally honest, there is no way we deserved to take anything out of that game," admitted Mickey Moran.

"Fundamental errors" were blamed for the two goals that effectively settled it, and the Donegal boss concluded with a stark message for his players: "Those fellows know they will have to examine their consciences. There are far too many games where we are in close games and we are losing them. And it has to stop."

Lyons had set out his league stall by picking seven debutants, choosing another relative rookie (in Darren Magee) at midfield and recalling Ray Cosgrove from the inter-county wilderness.



And with the home fans in the 8,000 crowd adding boisterous support, Dublin was ready to acclaim a new era.

If only the programme makers were equally prepared. Underneath the all-new team sheet, the list of Dublin selectors was 'blacked out'. On closer inspection you realised why: beneath the black ink could be spied the names Tom Carr, John O'Leary, Richie Crean and Dom Twomey. Ouch!

Back on the pitch, Dublin's shallow pool of experience was further hit by a groin strain that ruled out Paul Curran, would-be captain for the day.

Enter Declan Darcy, the former Leitrim centre-back turned Dublin forward who proved a revelation in his old No 6 role.

Lyons wouldn't speculate on whether this centre-back posting will become permanent, but he thought Darcy had a "superb game" cutting out the Donegal supply lines.

Some of his other positional tinkering proved less successful, with Peadar Andrews given a first-half chasing by Devenney.

The Donegal livewire had

three points from play by the interval, at which point Donegal had fought back from four down to trail by just 0-6 to 0-5.

Coman Goggins then took up the marking duties but the All Star corner-back fared no better, leaking two points and fouling Devenney for another easy free before Andrews resumed the onerous task.

Dublin's other inside back, David Henry, was spared the nightmare job and had a superb debut.

Alan Brogan continued his rich vein of form with another 1-3 haul, while Ray Cosgrove did his confidence no harm with two points from play and a key assist for both goals.

Meanwhile, John McNally hinted that Dublin may have found a genuine free-taker with two great strikes from 50 yards.

He also linked play well before hobbling off with a dead leg after 45 minutes.

By then, Shane Ryan had already appeared in a new half-forward role and his delivery created the chance for Cosgrove to set up Brogan's opening goal.

There could have been

goals before that, with James O'Connor hitting the woodwork for Dublin in the first half and a Devenney pile-driver brilliantly pushed over by Stephen Cluxton.

The occasion was also marked by a low-key demonstration from the Dublin Supporters' Club over plans to split the county.

A letter of protest over the SRC proposals and support for the county board stance was handed over by supporters' club secretary Joe Nugent to Dublin chairman John Bailey who hailed the protest a great success.

However, his claim that up to 10,000 people signed a petition seemed to stretch credulity — especially as no petition forms were seen anywhere near this reporter in the stand.

MAN OF THE MATCH — B Devenney.
SCORERS — Dublin: A Brogan 1-3, R Cosgrove 0-3 (1f), J Magee 1-0, J McNally 0-2 (1 '45', 1f), C Whelan, C Goggins 0-1 each. Donegal: B Devenney 0-9 (4f), J Gildea, M Hegarty, J McGuinness, C McFadden, A Sweeney (f) 0-1 each.

DUBLIN — S Cluxton; D Henry, P Andrews, C Goggins; P Casey, D Darcy, B Cahill; D Horman, D Magee; J O'Connor, C Whelan, E Bennis; A Brogan, J McNally, R Cosgrove. Subs: S Ryan for O'Connor half-time, J Magee for McNally (inj) 45 mins, C Murphy for D Magee 69, J Gavin for Cosgrove 71.

DONEGAL — G McGill; P Campbell, E Doherty, P McConaghy; N McGinley, M Crossan, R Sweeney; J Gildea, P McGonigle; A Sweeney, M Hegarty, D Diver; B McLaughlin, B Devenney, J Gallagher. Subs: J McGuinness for McGonigle 40, C McFadden for R Sweeney 46, K Browne for McConaghy 58, A Gallagher for J Gallagher 60, C Toye for McLaughlin 70.
REF — M Ryan (Limerick).

Allianz

Leagues

Moran moves put Offaly in their place

| | |
|---------|------|
| DONEGAL | 0-16 |
| OFFALY | 0-13 |

AFTER a frustrating fortnight on the sidelines, Offaly's opening league game proved something of a baptism of fire yesterday when they left Tullamore realising why their Division 1A is called the proverbial 'Group of Death'.

Turning to take the wind advantage at half-time they were two points up and on their home-patch, albeit before an unusually small crowd of approximately 1,200 because of the hurlers' involvement elsewhere. But the omens were still good.

They had watched Donegal fall asleep just before half-time and suddenly got a run of four unanswered points on them with teenage full-forward Neville Coughlan, Basil Malone and Pascal Kellaghan all playing well to set up their 0-10 to 0-8 lead.

John Kenny, a late replacement for Seán Grennan but excellent on his own return from a long lay-off, had already forced Donegal to change their centre-back and the visitors' free-taking, was abysmal, with four of their six wides from placed balls.

And midfield debutant Adrian Mahon and James Grennan had wrestled the power back from John Gildea and Jim McGuinness.

Ultimately Donegal's greater hunger wrangled it, and the match, back and their manager Mickey Moran can certainly take credit for some key switches and substitutions that got a result which helped make up for last week's defeat by Dublin.



CLIONA
FOLEY

The switch of John Gildea to centre-forward, Ray Sweeney to centre-back and the introduction of several youngsters like Johnny McCafferty and Kevin Rafferty to their attack saw Donegal finally reap the rewards from their dominant possession.

That Adrian Sweeney's free-taking suddenly clicked into gear also helped, as did excellent performances upfront from Brian Roper, Jim McGuinness and man of the match Michael Hegarty.

But it was the spread of scoring which most delighted Moran who is noticeably without soccer-tied Brendan Devenney again next week when they face the might of All-Ireland

champions Galway.

"Brendan is a brilliant player but I've always told our forwards it's up to themselves to show what they're made of and they did that today," Moran enthused.

Certainly Donegal looked sharper and fitter.

The switch of Barry Mooney onto Roper and the excellent Cathal Daly onto James Gallagher helped somewhat to shore up Offaly's defensive frailties but couldn't hide all the cracks and they conceded too many frees, which Sweeney and Brian McLaughlin punished, levelling the game within 10 minutes of the restart.

When Pascal Kellaghan made a superb catch and score to steal the lead again after 55 minutes Offaly looked game for the final battle.

They never scored again as Donegal harried and grafted for each other. Even when Vinny Claffey got a late goal chance, laying a lethal ball back into an open goal-mouth, none of his teammates were there to support him, with Mark Crossar making the vital interception.

MAN OF THE MATCH — M Hegarty (Donegal).

SCORERS — Donegal: A Sweeney 0-5 (4f), B Roper and M Hegarty 0-3 each, E Diver, J McCafferty and K Rafferty 0-1 each, J Gallagher and B McLaughlin 0-1 (f) each. Offaly: P Kellaghan 0-3, C Quinn 0-3 (frees), B Malone and D Claffey 0-2 each, K Slattery, J Kenny and N Coughlan 0-1 each.

DONEGAL — T Blake; M Crossar (Capt) E Doherty, N McGinley, R Sweeney, J Browne, D Diver, J Gildea, J McGuinness B McLaughlin, M Hegarty, B Roper, J Gallagher, A Sweeney, J Gallagher. Subs K Cassidy for Browne (inj, 15 mins), McCafferty for J Gallagher (48), K Rafferty for McLaughlin (53), C Toye for Roper (68).

OFFALY — P Kelly; C Daly (Capt), C Rafferty, B Mooney; J Hurst, A McNamee K Slattery, J Grennan, A Mahon; C Quinn, J Kenny, B Malone; D Claffey, N Coughlan, P Kellaghan. Subs — D Ryan for Quinn (44 mins), V Claffey for Coughlan (inj, 50), F Cullen for Kenn (60), M Stones for Hurst (71).

REF — P Russell (Tipperary).

Tribesmen weather Ballyshannon storm

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| GALWAY | 0-9 |
| DONEGAL | 0-7 |

THE League ambitions of All-Ireland champions Galway are back on track following a hard-earned victory in Ballyshannon.

In an absorbing, low-scoring contest on a heavy pitch, the Tribesmen's class shone through in the end despite Donegal giving it their best shot in the second half.

While the champions were deserving winners, but for some wayward Donegal shooting, particularly in the second half, it could have been all so different. A Donegal wides tally of 16 to Galway's six tells its own story.

When Micky Moran's men drew level in the early minutes of the second period, the towering Kevin Walsh at midfield, Ja Fallon, Paul Clancy, Derek Savage and

new boy Kieron Comer came into their own with Comer, Savage and Clancy forcing three points in three minutes to ease Galway back in front.

And, while they failed to score for the remaining 18 minutes, they restricted Donegal to a single point. Leading 0-5 to 0-1 by the half hour mark, courtesy of four magical points from Kieran Comer and one from Paul Clancy, John O'Mahony's men found themselves just two points in front at the break (0-5 to 0-3) as Adrian Sweeney grabbed two Donegal points.

With the breeze on their backs and Brendan Devenney, who scored the night before in Finn Harps' 2-1 win over Cobh, replacing Johnny McCafferty, Donegal got the second half off to a good start and were on level terms inside 13 minutes. Devenney pointed two frees and Adrian

Sweeney tied the game with a splendid point. However, it was then that the All-Ireland champions stamped their authority with those late points from Savage, Comer and Clancy.

The only blemish for Galway was the late sending off of Derek Savage, who got a straight red card five minutes from time for a late charge on Eamonn Doherty.

MAN OF THE MATCH — K Comer (Galway).

SCORERS — Galway: K Comer 0-6 (2f), P Clancy 0-2, D Savage 0-1. Donegal: A Sweeney 0-4 (1f), B Devenney 0-2f, E Doherty 0-1.

GALWAY — A Keane; M Comer, G Fahy, T Meehan; M Collieran, K Fitzgerald, R Fahey; K Walsh, J Bergin; P Clancy, J Fallon, M Clancy; D Savage, K Comer, T Joyce. **Subs:** S O Domhnaill for M Clancy; J Donnellan for T Joyce (both 45).

DONEGAL — T Blake; E Doherty, M Crossan, N McGinley; R Sweeney, B Monaghan, D Diver; J McDenis, K Rafferty; M Hegarty, J Gildea, B Roper; A Gallagher, A Sweeney, J McCafferty. **Subs:** B Devenney (ht) for G McCafferty; J Gallagher for A Gallagher; P McGonagle for B Roper; C McFadden for J McGinness; K Cassidy for E Doherty (inj).

REF — S McCormack (Meath).

Toye story finishes with Donegal flourish

DONEGAL 1-10

TYRONE 0-11

NEIGHBOURS Donegal halted high-flying Tyrone in this highly competitive Division 1A north-west derby clash in Seán MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey yesterday.

Thanks to a late scoring flourish, it was the men in the green and gold who came out on top with two points to spare. Hitting four late points to just one for Tyrone, Mickey Moran's men were full value for their win.

With Peter Canavan not making the starting line-up due to a thigh strain, Tyrone were like Hamlet without the Prince.

Donegal were very dangerous when they threatened especially in the first half with Brendan Devenney and Adrian Sweeney running the Tyrone rearguard ragged. Level approaching the interval, Donegal struck for the game's crucial score when Christy Toye rattled the back of the rigging.

Powered on by John Gildea, Sweeney stretched the lead out to four points before a late Stephen O'Neill point deep in injury time gave the red and white army hope.

Tyrone resumed as if they meant business and with sub Eoin Mulligan and Cormac McAnallen to the fore. Within ten minutes of the restart they were on level terms and ten minutes later Paul McLaughlin found the target to push the Ulster champions in front.

However, coming down the home straight it was Donegal who had all the answers to claim both points.

MAN OF THE MATCH — R. McMenamin (Tyrone).

SCORERS — Donegal: A. Sweeney 0-5 (3f), B. Devenney 0-3 (2f), C. Toye 1-0, C. McFadden 0-2. Tyrone: S. O'Neill 0-4 (4f), E. Mulligan (ff), R. McMenamin 0-2 each, B. Dooher (f), J. Quinn, P. McLaughlin 0-1 each.

DONEGAL — T. Blake; D. Diwer, M. Crossan, N. McGinley; R. Sweeney, B. Monaghan, K. Cassidy; K. Rafferty, J. Gildea; J. McGuinness, M. Hegarty, C. Toye; A. Sweeney, B. Devenney, B. Roper. **Subs:** C. McFadden for B. Roper (53), J. Haran for M. Hegarty (60), P. McGonagle for J. McGuinness (67).

TYRONE — P. Ward; C. Gormley, C. Lawn, B. Robinson; R. McMenamin, C. Holmes, D. McCrossan; C. McAnallen, J. Quinn; B. Dooher, S. O'Neill, B. McGuigan; E. McGinley, K. Hughes, R. Thornton. **Subs:** C. Gourley for C. Lawn (4), E. Mulligan for R. Thornton (HT), P. McLaughlin for J. Quinn (49).

REF — M. Daly (Mayo).

GAELIC GAMES SCOREBOARD

ALLIANZ FL DIVISION 1A

| | | | |
|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| Dublin | 3-13 | Westmeath | 1-16 |
| Cork | 1-11 | Galway | 1-8 |
| Donegal | 1-10 | Tyrone | 0-11 |
| Roscommon | 1-15 | Offaly | 2-11 |

| | P | W | D | L | Pts | Diff |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|
| Tyrone | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 | +17 |
| Dublin | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | +3 |
| Galway | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | +4 |
| Donegal | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | +1 |
| Roscommon | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 | -12 |
| Westmeath | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | -3 |
| Cork | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | -7 |
| Offaly | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | -4 |

ALLIANZ FL DIVISION 1B

| | | | |
|-----------|------|---------|------|
| Mayo | 2-14 | Cavan | 2-12 |
| Fermanagh | 1-13 | Kildare | 1-9 |
| Sligo | 0-14 | Derry | 1-9 |
| Down | 2-11 | Clare | 0-9 |

| | P | W | D | L | Pts | Diff |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|
| Mayo | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 | +24 |
| Kildare | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | +3 |
| Sligo | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | +2 |
| Down | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | +6 |
| Cavan | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | +2 |
| Fermanagh | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | -5 |
| Clare | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | -31 |
| Derry | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -15 |

ALLIANZ FL DIVISION 2A

| | | | |
|----------|------|--------|------|
| Armagh | 3-12 | Antrim | 1-11 |
| Leitrim | 0-13 | Louth | 1-10 |
| Wicklow | 2-21 | London | 1-1 |
| Limerick | 2-12 | Kerry | 0-16 |

| | P | W | D | L | Pts | Diff |
|----------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|
| Limerick | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 | +32 |
| Armagh | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 | +30 |
| Kerry | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 | +20 |
| Louth | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | +35 |
| Wicklow | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | +2 |
| Antrim | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Leitrim | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | -31 |
| London | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -85 |

ALLIANZ FL DIVISION 2B

| | | | |
|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| Longford | 1-12 | Monaghan | 0-11 |
| Meath | 3-11 | Waterford | 0-6 |
| Tipperary | 1-11 | Carlow | 0-12 |
| Wexford | 2-19 | Laois | 2-12 |

| | P | W | D | L | Pts | Diff |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|-----|------|
| Wexford | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 | +12 |
| Longford | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 | +22 |
| Meath | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | +15 |
| Tipperary | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | +5 |
| Laois | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | +4 |
| Monaghan | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | -5 |
| Carlow | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -26 |
| Waterford | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -33 |

WALSH CUP SH FINAL

Wexford 1-13 Kilkenny 1-12

KEHOE CUP SH FINAL

Wicklow 1-13 Westmeath 0-8

FITZGIBBON CUP FINAL

UL 2-14 Waterford IT 2-11

RYAN CUP FINAL

DCU 1-13 St Pat's 0-11

LEINSTER COLLS SF A SEMI-FINALS

St Pat's 1-10 St Mels 0-7

Dundalk Schs 3-10 St Peter's 2-7

PLAYED SATURDAY

ALL-IRELAND CLUB SF SEMI-FINAL

Nemo Rgs 0-9 Charlestown 0-7

(Cork) (Mayo)

HASTINGS CUP FINAL

Kildare 1-16 Fermanagh 3-7

MUNSTER MFC ROUND ROBIN

Tipperary 2-11 Kerry 2-9

Limerick 1-11 Clare 1-4

LEINSTER U-21 FC

Dublin 5-17 Carlow 0-2

Meath 1-18 Kilkenny 1-2

Westmeath 1-6 Louth 0-5

Wexford 2-11 Laois 0-9

LEINSTER MHL

Offaly 3-13 Laois 2-6

Dublin 0-16 Antrim 1-3

MICRODY CUP SF SEMI-FINAL

St Michael's 1-8 St Pat's 0-6

(Enniskillen) (Maghera)

FL DIVISION 1A

Irate Dempsey
lashes referee

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| DONEGAL | 1-6 |
| WESTMEATH | 0-7 |

REFEREE Charlie Collins received a garda escort from the field at Cusack Park in Mullingar yesterday as irate Westmeath supporters vented their ire following this defeat to Donegal.

Collins, who had made a number of baffling decisions during the game, also came under fire from an angry Westmeath manager Luke Dempsey who described the refereeing as the worst he had seen since taking up inter-county duty in 1995.

"The GAA have a lot to answer for," he fumed.

The sending off of All-Star midfielder Rory O'Connell 15 minutes into the second half proved crucial to the outcome. The home side had overturned a three-point interval deficit when O'Connell, deservedly, received a second yellow card.

With O'Connell gone, Donegal moved centre back Barry Monaghan to a more advanced position, and they went on to dominate the final 15 minutes. The visitors sealed the game in the 72nd

minute with a point from midfielder Kevin Rafferty.

Earlier, Westmeath made a bright start in difficult conditions with Joe Fallon slotting two frees. John Gildea opened the Donegal account in the ninth minute before referee Collins controversially awarded Donegal a 17th-minute penalty which Adrian Sweeney drilled to the net.

Michael Hegarty and Joe Fallon exchanged points before Donegal sub Johnny McCafferty pointed a '45 to send the visitors in at half-time leading by 1-3 to 0-3.

Westmeath swept forward after the break and Joe Fallon and J P Casey (2) had the home side level by the ninth minute before O'Connell was banished.

SCORERS — **Donegal:** A Sweeney 1-2 (1-0 pen, 2f), J Gildea, K Rafferty, M Hegarty, J McGonagle 0-1 ('45) each. **Westmeath:** J Fallon 0-4 (3f), J P Casey 0-2f.

DONEGAL — T Blake; D Diver, M Crossan, N McGinley; R Sweeney, B Monaghan, K Cassidy; J Gildea, K Rafferty; C Toye, M Hegarty, J McGuinness; A Sweeney, C McFadden, B Roper. **Subs:** J McCafferty for Roper, P McConigly for McGinley, J Haron for McGuinness, P McGonigle for McCafferty.

WESTMEATH — C Mullin; J Davitt, K Ryan, K McKinley; D Murphy, D Healy, J Keane; R O'Connell, D O'Shaughnessy; F Wilson, M Ennis, D Heavin; J Fallon, P Conway, J P Casey. **Subs:** D Gavin for Heavin, D Mitchell for Murphy.

REF — C Collins (Mayo).

Cork in danger

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| DONEGAL | 1-12 |
| CORK | 0-9 |

IT'S all set up nicely for Donegal after this win in Ballyshannon yesterday. They now go to Roscommon needing a win against the Connaught champions to join Tyrone in the last four.

Once again, Brendan Devenney and Adrian Sweeney carried the main scoring threat. Devenney, who played in Finn Harps' win over Limerick City the night before, gave early ground to Ciaran O'Sullivan but rose to the challenge as the contest wore on.

A Kevin Rafferty goal, after he was sent on his way by Devenney, was the game's turning point. It put his side into a two point lead minutes after Fionan Murray had kicked Cork to the front.

In the space of two minutes the home side were four up through Kevin Cassidy and Christy Toye. Murray pulled one back before Sweeney gave Donegal a 1-6 to 0-4 half-time cushion.

With Colm McFadden and Brendan Devenney hitting early points for Donegal to a solitary reply from Conrad Murphy the game as a contest fizzled out. Powered on by John Gildea, Donegal added further points from Rafferty, Devenney, Michael Hegarty and Sweeney with Murray and second half substitute Jim Donogue getting late points for Cork.

While Donegal look forward to a possible semi final spot, Cork need a win or at least a draw when they face Tyrone on Sunday next to avoid a drop back to Division 2.

MAN OF THE MATCH — J Gildea (Donegal).

SCORERS — **Donegal:** K Rafferty 1-1, B Devenney (1f), A Freeney 0-3, M Hegarty 0-2, C Toye, C McFadden, K Cassidy 0-1. **Cork:** F Murray 0-5 (1f), N O'Leary, C Murphy, BJ O'Sullivan, J Donogue 0-1.

DONEGAL — T Blake; D Diver, M Crossan, N McGinley; R Sweeney, B Monaghan, K Cassidy; J Gildea, K Rafferty; C Toye, M Hegarty, J Haran; C McFadden, B Devenney, A Freeney. **Subs:** P McGonagle for C McFadden; R Kavanagh for C Toye; E Doherty for K Cassidy.

CORK — A Quirke; N O'Donovan, C O'Sullivan, A Lynch; P Kissane, R McCarthy, S Levis; N Murphy, M Cronin; BJ O'Sullivan, C Murphy, N O'Leary; F Murray, M McCarthy, C Crowley. **Subs:** J Miskella for A O'Donovan; M O'Sullivan for N O'Leary; S O'Brien for C Crowley.

REF — S Prior (Leitrim).

Donegal lose track of time

| | |
|-----------|------|
| ROSCOMMON | 2-13 |
| DONEGAL | 1-12 |

JOHN TOBIN isn't even half way through his second season in charge of Roscommon but he already led them to a Connacht championship triumph and into consecutive Allianz football League semi-finals.

That's quite an achievement, given that when he took over in October 2000, Roscommon were still peeping out from under the humiliation of a shocking championship performance against Leitrim and feeling thoroughly sorry for themselves.

He was the personification of a mischievous little wizard as he back-slapped his mud-splattered heroes off Dr Hyde Park yesterday after their winner-take-all success over Donegal which planted the Roscommon flag on the Division 1A summit after taking 11 of 14 points, including seven in 15 days.

"The one thing I wanted to establish in Roscommon was a degree of consistency. People might have thought that we were a flash in the pan last year so it was fierce important to do well in this League.

"We keep rising the bar for ourselves and now we have to move it up a notch again in the semi-final," he said.

There were some aspects of yesterday's performance which must have dismayed him, not least the porous tendencies of his full-back line, but he has so many positives to trade in that he was well entitled to whistle a happy tune on his way home to Tuam last night.

Once Donegal manager, Mickey Moran, gets some satisfactory answers to why his side couldn't resist press-



Martin BREHENY

ing the self-destruct button he too can be reasonably happy with the rate of progress as they head for an Ulster championship clash with Cavan on May 12.

It was as if they hadn't adjusted their clocks properly in the first half for while Roscommon started the game at 3.30, Donegal didn't join in until 4.0, by which time they were 1-6 to 0-1 behind.

"Roscommon wanted it a whole lot more than we did at that stage. They were first to everything and took their chances well," reflected Moran ruefully afterwards.

Roscommon's goal, scored by Gary Cox in the tenth minute, typified the difference between the sides. Nigel Dineen's lob looked weighted in favour of the defence but Cox persisted and rose highest to skilfully flick the ball into the net.

Donegal's short passing game was unsuited to the wet, heavy conditions but, in fairness, their workrate never dropped and they launched the revival on the half hour when Adrian Sweeney whizzed a penalty kick to the Roscommon net after he had been fouled by David Casey.

Roscommon led by 1-8 to 1-3 at the interval but were only a point clear five min-

utes into the second half after Donegal whipped over four excellent points. The momentum was now very much with Donegal but, four minutes later, they were hit by a torpedo from which they never recovered.

Stephen Lohan mis-hit as free from 45 metres but as Donegal midfielder, John Gildea, who otherwise had a fine game, stooped to gather, the ball skidded past him on the wet surface and into the net.

It was a disastrous break for Donegal and four minutes later their balance sheet looked even more lop-sided when centre-back, Barry Monaghan, was sent off for a second bookable offence.

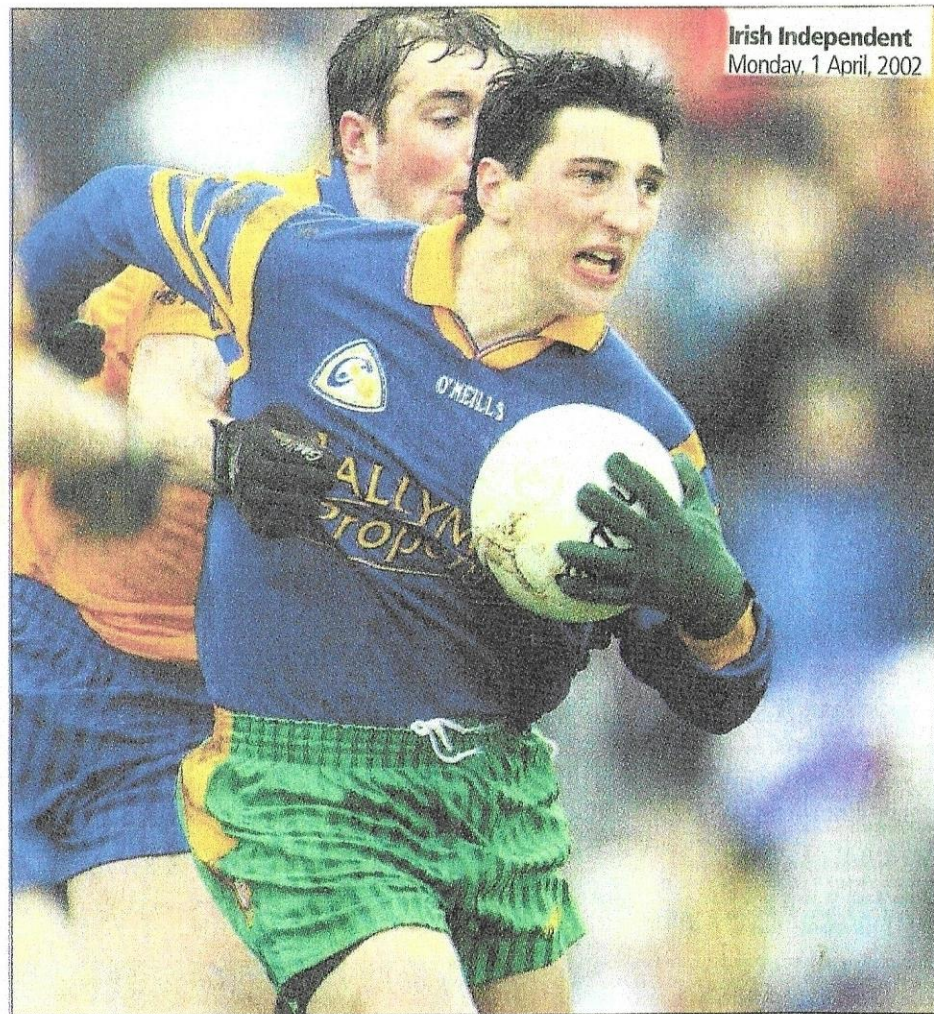
Donegal were suddenly peering up a very steep mountain but they took it on with limitless effort and enthusiasm and were only a goal adrift with five minutes remaining.

Roscommon had sub full-back, Fergal Carroll, sent off for a second bookable offence in the 63rd minute which raised the apprehension levels for their fans in the 8,000 crowd but their worries were unfounded.

Donegal pressed on in desperate search of an equalising goal but Roscommon held firm and decorated a good day's work with a Dineen point which put them four ahead and clear of all trouble.

It was appropriate that Dineen should start and finish the Roscommon scoring as he was very much their reference point in a lively attack where Stephen Lohan and Gary Cox also impressed.

Francie Grehan and Paul Noone were strong and effective in the half-back line while Seamus O'Neill made a few good catches at midfield. However, both he and David



Irish Independent
Monday, 1 April, 2002

Donegal's Michael Hegarty bursts through the challenge of Roscommon's David Casey during their National League game at Dr Hyde Park yesterday. Picture: Ray McManus

Casey were tested to the limit and beyond by John Gildea and various assistants and were replaced in the second half.

Gildea, despite the mistake which led to Roscommon's second goal, Damien Diver, Mark Crossan, Adrian Sweeney and Colm McFadden who scored 2-6 for their U-21's on Saturday, all did

well for Donegal who are certainly a whole lot more formidable that they looked a year ago.

Next time though, they will have to remember that the game starts at the throw-in, not 30 minutes later.

MAN OF THE MATCH — Nigel Dineen (Roscommon).
SCORERS — Roscommon: S Lohan 1-5 (1-4), N Dineen 0-5 (3), G Cox 1-1, S O'Neill, J Dunning 0-1 each. Donegal: A Sweeney 1-4 (1-0 pen, 3), C McFadden

0-3, B McLoughlin, M Hegarty (2) 0-2 each, K Rafferty 0-1 each.
ROSCOMMON — D Thompson; D Gavin, J Whyte, I Daly; M Rafferty, F Grehan, P Noone; S O'Neill, D Casey; J Tiernan, S Lohan, G Cox; N Dineen, J Dunning, J Hanley. Subs: F O'Donnell for Casey (43), F Carroll for Whyte (50), J Egan for Tiernan (51), D Connellan for O'Neill (59), G Lohan for S Lohan (70).
DONEGAL — T Blake; D Diver, M Crossan, N McGinley, R Sweeney, B Monaghan, K Cassidy; J Gildea, K Rafferty, C Toye, M Hegarty, J Haron, A Sweeney, S Friel, C McFadden. Subs: P McConigle for Toye (44), B McLaughlin for Friel (47), P Campbell for Rafferty (53), B Boyle for Cassidy (63).
REF — M Monahan (Kildare).



DECISION
Mickey Moran

Moran to go?

by Tom Comack

Mickey Moran's future with Donegal, the possibility of St. Eunan's facing an objection similar to the one which cost them the 1997 county final and county chairman Danny Harkin's outspoken comments on 'pay-for-play' dominate this morning's GAA agenda.

On the Moran issue Donegal GAA officials were still holding out hope yesterday afternoon that the Derry man would remain on as county senior team manager.

However, indications by Monday lunchtime were not positive, county board officials unsure if Moran would attend last night's crucial county board meeting where Moran's decision on his future would be confirmed. One official said Moran would not attend the meeting prompting fears that were he to stay on he would be in Ballybofey to report on his second year in charge.

Sunday to this newspaper that he would declare his future on Monday. Moran was tight-lipped on his own future before he watched his son Conleth contribute a goal in Derry minor's All-Ireland semi-final win over Longford.

The Derry man, who has completed two of his three year term, was due to convey his intentions to the county secretary by yesterday evening (Monday) having previously delayed his decision to announce his intentions.

ARDARA TO OBJECT?

Meanwhile, it has emerged that Ardara may be about to lodge an objection to St. Eunan's following their narrow two point defeat by the Letterkenny club in the Donegal Democrat championship first round play-off game in Sean MacCumhail Park, on Sunday evening.

Ardara are alleging that the county champions played an illegal player in Sunday evening's encounter (which St.

eight). A club spokesperson said yesterday afternoon that the club were considering the possibility of lodging an objection.

"We will discuss the matter at a club meeting and will make a decision on the issue later this week," the Ardara spokesperson said. Co. secretary Noreen Doherty confirmed Ardara have three days, from the date of the game, to do so.

Ardara, should they object, will stir memories of Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon's controversial objection to a St. Eunan's player in the 1997 county final. That objection cost St. Eunan's the county championship of that year.

And finally, the smell of cordite remains in the air following county chairman, Danny Harkin's controversial remarks on pay-for-play. However, the Convoy man was absent (on leave) from last night's county committee meeting where it was anticipated his remarks and the board's subsequent distancing from them, were likely to