

# 2005

**Team Manager: Brian McEniff**

## Dr. Mc Kenna Cup.

2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-08	Fermanagh	0-08
9 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	3-09	St. Mary's	0-09
16 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Clones	Donegal	0-12	Monaghan	2-15

**Winner: Tyrone**

## Ulster Senior Football Championship

12 <sup>th</sup> June	Clones	Armagh	0-12	Donegal	0-12
19 <sup>th</sup> June	Clones	Armagh	3-11	Donegal	1-10

10 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>Ulster Final</b>	Armagh	2-08	Tyrone	0-14
25 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>Ulster Final – replay</b>	Armagh	0-13	Tyrone	0-11

## All Ireland Qualifiers 2005.

26 <sup>th</sup> June	Aughrim	Donegal	0-16	Wicklow	0-12
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Breffni Park	Cavan	1-11	Donegal	1-10

28 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Semi final	Croke Park	Kerry	1-19	Cork	0-09
4 <sup>th</sup> Sept.		Croke Park	Tyrone	1-13	Armagh	1-12
25 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	<b>Final</b>	<b>Croke Park</b>	<b>Tyrone</b>	<b>1-16</b>	<b>Kerry</b>	<b>2-10</b>

## National Football League - 2005 Allianz NFL Division 1

06/02/05	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-10	Tyrone	1-11
13/02/05	Ballina	Mayo	2-10	Donegal	1-11
06/03/05	Mullingar	Westmeath	1-12	Donegal	1-11
13/03/05	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-10	Kerry	1-09
20/03/05	Parnell Park	Dublin	1-11	Donegal	0-13
27/03/05	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-13	Offaly	1-11
03/04/05	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	3-11	Cork	1-07

## Final League Table

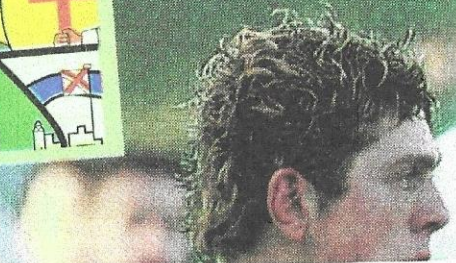
Team	P	W	D	L	For	Against	Diff	Pts
Tyrone	7	5	0	2	8-94	5-83	20	10
Mayo	7	5	0	2	8-98	8-81	17	10
Kerry	7	5	0	2	10-87	7-79	17	10
Dublin	7	4	0	3	7-74	6-84	-7	8
Cork	7	2	2	3	6-77	7-73	1	6
Offaly	7	2	1	4	8-78	7-93	-12	5
<b>Donegal</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6-79</b>	<b>8-71</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
Westmeath	7	1	1	5	6-67	11-90	-38	3

1 <sup>st</sup> May	<b>Final</b>	<b>Croke Park</b>	<b>Armagh</b>	<b>1-21</b>	<b>Wexford</b>	<b>1-14</b>
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# Honours even at Ballyshannon

Dr. McKenna Cup

Donegal.....0-8  
Fermanagh....0-8



**It was honours even in the Dr. McKenna Cup in Ballyshannon on Sunday with Donegal having to draw on some old hands to keep Fermanagh from inflicting another notch on their holster.**

A crowd in excess of 3,000 gathered for the first game of the new year and after a mediocre first half, they were treated to a fairly exciting encounter that was always in the balance until the final whistle.

Peter Campbell reports from Fr. Tierney Park

Photos by Thomas Gallagher

Monaghan referee, Gerard McCarron, made good use of his whistle, stopping the encounter 71 times for frees. The conditions played their part, with a swirling cold breeze making it difficult for the players.

The defences were mostly on top, apart from one moment nineteen minutes into the second half when Raymond Gallagher almost put the icing on his return to the county colours. He was put

through after Donegal mixed up a free and he looked to have the winning of the game, but his thunderous drive came back off the crossbar and a relieved Donegal watched as Devenish full-forward, John O'Flanagan, put the rebound over the bar.

It was the only real goal chance of the game and one felt that if it had been converted then Fermanagh would have stayed in front.

Over the 70+ minutes the Maguire side looked the most likely, especially as they reached half-time only a point adrift after playing against the stiff breeze. Donegal were relying almost totally on Colm McFadden's frees to keep their noses in front and the St. Michaels man had a mixed day, missing as many times as he hit the target.

Apart from three McFadden frees

and an opening free from newcomer Ryan Bradley, Donegal had only one point from play in the opening period - that from Brian Roper.

Fermanagh fared a little better with Fergal Reilly getting their opening point from play, while Gary Maguire added a second on 24 minutes.

Their other two points in the opening period came just before the break, two frees from Mark Little, one of which seemed to be a free out to Donegal.

Donegal's lacklustre approach front in the opening half saw Michael Doherty of Four Masters drafted in to replace Conal Dunne late in the half, while Barry Dunnion replaced the injured Gavin Maguire on 21 minutes.

The half-time break saw another flurry of substitutions with Rory Gallagher making his comeback to the Fermanagh colours, while Neil Gallagher replaced Eamon Sweeney at midfield for Donegal.

The omens looked good for Fermanagh when Mark Little punished a poor clearance from Michael Boyle to level matters on 30 seconds and four minutes later Tom Brewster edged Fermanagh in front for the first time from a free.

Donegal responded well with Barry Dunnion and Rory Kavanagh creating an opening for Ryan Bradley to level matters and two minutes later Paddy McNulty drew a foul off Hugh Brady for Colm McFadden to point Donegal in front again.

Tom Brewster levelled matters again on 51 minutes from a free before Fermanagh had the chance to put daylight between the sides. A misplaced free from Barry Monaghan saw Rory Gallagher and Mark Murphy involved before Raymond Gallagher was put through but his effort cannoned off the crossbar and John O'Flanagan did well to pick up the rebound and point.

The score put Fermanagh 0-8 to 0-7 in front with more than fifteen minutes left but there was to be one more score - a pointed free from Colm McFadden on 62 minutes.

Both sides had chances before the end - Rory Gallagher from a sideline for Fermanagh and Colm McFadden and Brian Roper for Donegal, but the draw was probably a fair result.

The old problem of accuracy afflicted Donegal once more, hitting seven with the breeze and seven more against it.

On the plus side the displays of Ryan Bradley and Neil McGee were encouraging, while Michael Boyle made one mistake, but otherwise looked commanding.

They were a better side when Barry Dunnion was on the field, and improved even more with Neil Gallagher and Damien Diver, who came in for the last 13 minutes. Diver joined Brian Roper in the '99 club, both having now just one game short of the century with the county.

Of the regulars, Barry Monaghan

was sound; Eamon Reddin and Brian Roper had good games; Rory Kavanagh had a good second half, while Eamon McGee was outstanding throughout.

The introduction of Rory Gallagher certainly improved the Fermanagh cause but it was not the sort of game to make a real impression. Both Rory and Raymond showed that they have a lot to offer and Fermanagh, at full strength, will be a handful again in 2005.

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Eamon Reddin, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Gavin Maguire, Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy; Stephen McDermott, Eamon Sweeney; Ryan Bradley (0-2, 1f), Brian Roper (0-1), Rory Kavanagh; Conal Dunne, Paddy McNulty, Colm McFadden (0-5, f). Subs., Barry Dunnion for Maguire (21); Michael Doherty for Dunne (30); Neil Gallagher for Sweeney (ht); Damien Diver for N. McGee (59).

**Fermanagh:** Niall Tierney; Shane Goan, Hugh Brady, Declan Reilly; Raymond Johnston, Shane McDermott, Sean Burns; Fergal Reilly (0-1), Mark Murphy; Gary Maguire (0-1), Tom Brewster (0-2, 2f), Mark Little (0-3, 2f); Aidan Little, Sean O'Flanagan (0-1), Raymond Gallagher. Subs., Rory Gallagher for O'Reilly (ht); Karlo Rooney for Maguire (51); Ryan Carson for O'Flanagan (61); Damien Kelly for A. Little (62); Michael Lilly for S. Burns (66).

**Referee:** Gerard McCarron (Monaghan).

# Dr. McKenna Cup

Donegal . . . . 3-9  
St. Mary's . . . 0-9

**Donegal got their first win of 2005 under their belts with this facile victory over St. Mary's College, Belfast, at a windswept and a bitterly cold Fr. Tierney Park, on Sunday afternoon.**

Tom Comack reports  
Photos: Thomas Gallagher

And while it is early days yet, Brian McEniff, will have drawn some comfort from the outing and especially the displays of new men Ryan Bradley, and to a lesser extent Conal Dunne, Paddy McNulty and Neil Gallagher.

This quartet along with Damian Diver, Barry Dunion, and Stephen McDermott were the pick of the bunch, though it must be stressed St. Mary's were disappointing. With the exception of Dan Gordan, Le. Meenan and Mark Donnelly the rest were well below par.

McEniff made three changes from the side that drew with Fermanagh seven days earlier at the same venue while his opposite number, Paddy Tally, fielded just seven of the team that went down by a single point to Monaghan, in their opening game.

Barry Monaghan (flu), Rory Kavanagh (exams) and Eamon McGee (Sligo IT) were the Donegal absentee's, while Armagh's Ronan Clarke was one of the big names missing from Mary's line-up.

Four Masters' Shane Carr and Barry Dunion came into the defence for Monaghan and McGee while Neil Gallagher started at midfield with Stephen McDermott moving to centre half-forward. Kevin Cassidy moved in from the wing to centre halfback in the reshuffle.

The game also saw the first outings of the New Year for Michael Hegarty and Adrian Sweeney, both coming on late in the game.

Donegal opened as if they meant business, and the Donegal boss

must have been happy with the opening quarter hour as his experimental side hit 1-6 to the visitors' solitary point.

Stephen McDermott and Ryan Bradley hit the opening points before Conal Dunne struck for the first of the three goals on seven minutes. The Eunan's man did well to coolly slot home from 10 metres, after being sent clear by Paddy McNulty, who took a great ball from Gavin Maguire under pressure.

And with Bradley (2) and one each from Paddy McNulty and Eamon Sweeney Donegal were well in control by the 14 minute mark, and had the look of winners about them. Michael McKeever on three minutes was the Mary's marksman.

Bradley, Dunne and Stephen McDermott did most of the damage in this period with Bradley's second strike from play a brilliant score. The Buncrana man raced through from midfield before he drove over from 30 metres, with his left boot.

But worryingly, the home team did not score again in the half as the Students came more into the game. This was in no small way due to the industry of Down's Dan Gordon around the middle. And by the half-time break, the Students had reduced the margin to five points, 1-6 to 0-4, thanks to strikes from Damian McCann, and Leo Meenan. Meenan's two scores coming from close range frees.

But Donegal were back in the comfort zone again within three

■ **Donegal's Barry Dunion goes for goal against St. Mary's in Ballyshannon on Sunday.1101TG07**

minutes of the restart when Colm McFadden pounced for goal number two. The St. Michael's man hammered home through a crowd of bodies from close range with Paddy McNulty, once again providing the final pass.

Mark Donnelly got Mary's off the mark two minutes later, with a individual effort, but with Bradley and Dunne taking over where the left off at the break they



had two points on the board and the lead extended out to nine points, 2-8 to 0-5 by the 46th minute.

Meenan converted twice from close range, before Brian Roper marked his hundredth appearance with a long range point as the game entered the closing fifteen minutes.

Stephen Laffety and Aidan McCarron knocked over late scores before Paddy McNulty took full advantage of a mix in the Mary's area to slide home soccer style goal number three to make the final score sheet an even more convincing look.

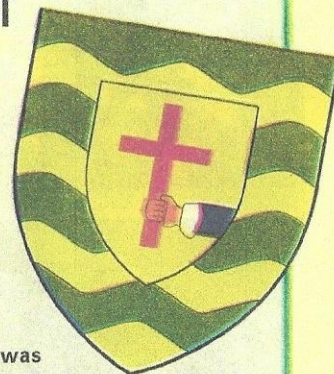
And while McNulty score was only academic it could yet prove to be a crucial score if the Fermanagh and Donegal end up level on points and semi final qualification is decided on score average.

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Shane Carr; Neill McGee; Damian Diver; Gavin Maguire, Kevin Cassidy, Barry Dunion; Eamon Sweeney (0-1), Neil Gallagher; Ryan Bradley(0-4,2F), Stephen McDermott (0-1), Brian Roper (0-1), Colm McFadden (1-0), Paddy McNulty (1-1), Conal Dunne (1-1). Subs: Brendan Boyle for E. Sweeney; Stephen Cassidy for C. McFadden; Michael Hegarty for C.Dunne; Adrian Sweeney for S. McDermott:

**St. Mary's:** Kevin Murray; Cormac McAleer, Fergal Donnelly, Gary Smyth; Mark McCullagh, Joe McMahon, Michael McKeever; Dan Gordan, James Laverty; Liam Hare, Leo Meenan, Terry O'Neill; Ryan Keenan, Mark Donnelly, Damian McCann. Subs: Aidan McCarron for L. O'Hare; Thomas Hackett for C. McAleer; Niall McVeigh for J. Laverty; Joe McCullagh for M.McCullagh.

**Referee:** Seamus McNamee (Tyrone).

## Man of the match



**Ryan Bradley playing in only his second competitive game showed a maturity way beyond his experience and was without question Donegal's most threatening forward. He scored four points, two of them coming from play, with his second one of the scores of the game, coming after a great run and off his left boot to further underline his repertoire.**

## Turning Point

**Donegal laid down an early marker with a 1-3 in the opening eight minutes and were probably were always going to win the tie. But Conal Dunne's goal on seven minutes was the first nail in the Students coffin, and was a turning point in the game. Certainly Mary's heads dropped for the next ten minutes or so and the home team took full advantage.**

## Ref Watch

**Tyrone official Seamus McNamee like many of the players was cutting his teeth at this level and like so many new officials he was too fussy about the small things. His pet hates seem to be the pick off the ground and over carrying. In my view he got a few lift ups wrong especially in difficult conditions. But as the game was never a tight affair he did not make any earth shattering or game turning**



# Dr McKenna Cup Football

**MONAGHAN** .....2-15  
**DONEGAL** .....0-12

**It may only be January but Donegal's readiness for a life in the top flight of the National Football League is in doubt after suffering a big defeat at the hands of Monaghan in Clones on Sunday.**

Peter Campbell reports from Clones  
 Photos by Thomas Gallagher

What is alarming is the way Donegal were ripped apart in the second quarter with Monaghan scoring 1-6 without replay in a sixteen minute period from the 14th to 30th minutes.

The Donegal defence were porous and even allowing for the over-fussy refereeing of Tyrone official, Martin Sludden, it was obvious that only one team was up for the battle.

The only time that Donegal raised their game was for a period in the second half when a slight flare-up erupted after Barry Monaghan was fouled in a robust challenge.

Donegal were playing second fiddle in almost every part of the pitch. Dick Clerkin ruled the roost at midfield and the Freeman brothers were controlling the game. The difference in fitness levels was also very evident, which is a major worry for Donegal just three weeks from the start of the National Football League.

There were few bright spots to report on. In the previous two games young Ryan Bradley was making good headway, but he found Sunday a tough baptism and got little mercy from the rugged Farney men.

Monaghan have always proved a tough team for Donegal and we remember the NFL game in Ballyshannon last year when three Brendan Devenney goals stole the points.

## Very focused

In this game the result was never in doubt and Monaghan looked very focused under new manager, Seamus McEnaney.

Donegal got a perfect start with good points from Stephen Cassidy and a Colm McFadden free from close to 60m.

By the 9th minute Monaghan had their noses in front with Dick Clerkin (who was to finish with nine points), James Ward (free) and Dermot McArdle pointing.

Neil Gallagher sent Gavin Maguire through for a good Donegal score but Monaghan were back in front thanks to a baffling refereeing decision against Damien Diver which gave Dick Clerkin an easy free.

Stephen McDermott equalised for Donegal after good work from their best player, Kevin Cassidy, but thereafter Monaghan took control. Thomas Freeman put them ahead before Donegal had a goal chance. A high ball from Neil Gallagher broke to Paddy McNulty on the ground but his first-time effort was stopped by the 'keeper.

Monaghan got their chance of a goal at the other end when a Barry Monaghan free was miscued and Thomas Freeman was alert to send Fergal Duffy through to rattle the net.

Dick Clerkin added four points, three from frees of which one was of the 'soft' variety, Neil McGee being penalised for a pick-up off the ground when he seemed to make a genuine effort at a legal lift.

That put Monaghan 1-10 to 0-4 ahead with 30 minutes played. In the final minutes of the half Donegal, playing with the wind, made a mini recovery with points from Ryan Bradley, Colm McFadden and a Ryan Bradley free to leave six points between the teams at the break - Monaghan 1-10, Donegal 0-7.

Michael Hegarty joined the Donegal ranks at half-time and they again started well with Colm McFadden pointing a free.

That was cancelled on ten minutes by a Dick Clerkin free. McFadden and Clerkin again traded frees by the 51st minutes before Monaghan closed out the contest a minute later with their second goal.

Rory Kavanagh gave away a free at midfield and Mark Daly's free broke in front of the Donegal goal to Thomas Freeman, who drove it under the body of the advancing Michael Boyle.

From there to the finish the sides shared six points - sub. Nicholas Corrigan getting the three points for Monaghan while Colm McFadden and Ryan Bradley converted frees for Donegal before Adrian Sweeney completed the scoring a minute from the end of normal time.

Of the twelve Donegal points, six came from frees and they also kicked nine wides over the 70+ minutes.

## Six subs

The Donegal bench was busy, especially during the second half, with the six available subs all being used. It was academic because Donegal were never in with a chance but it again begs the question how this can happen when you have the Donegal official and the 4th official overseeing the matter of substitutions.

From the comments of the manager last week, Donegal didn't really want to win the game. Hopefully, that is the reason for the display.

**Monaghan:** Shane Duffy; Gary McQuaid, James Coyle, Colm Flanagan; James Ward (0-1,f), Ray Ronaghan, Damien Freeman; Mark Daly, Dick Clerkin (0-9, 6f); Dessie Mone, Stephen Gallogley, Dermot McArdle (0-1); Thomas Freeman (1-1), Fergal Duffy (1-0), Rory Woods. Subs., Nicholas Corrigan (0-3) for D. Mone (46); Declan McKernan for Gallogley; Hugh McElroy for Daly (both 62); Dessie Mone for F. Duffy.

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Niall McCready, Neil McGee, Damien Diver; Gavin Maguire (0-1), Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy; Eamon Sweeney, Neil Gallagher; Ryan Bradley (0-3, 2f), Stephen McDermott (0-1), Brian Roper; Colm McFadden (0-5, 4f), Paddy McNulty, Stephen Cassidy (0-1). Subs., Rory Kavanagh for Sweeney (20); Michael Hegarty (0-1) for McNulty (ht); Adrian Sweeney (0-1) for Cassidy (46); Barry Dunnion for Maguire (55); Brendan Boyle for McDermott (56); Eamon Reddin for Monaghan (60).

**Referee:** Martin Sludden (Tyrone).

## Man of the match

There were no Donegal men anywhere near contention. It is a battle between the Freeman brothers and Dick Clerkin. The Scotstown man was everywhere from full-back to full-forward and contributed nine points as well and gets the award.

## Turning point

The game was gone from Donegal's grasp when they gave away the first goal. A very poor free from Barry Monaghan went straight to a Monaghan man and it ended in the Donegal net within seconds.

## Ref watch

Martin Sludden would not have got a high mark if I was assessing him. I could count three poor decisions against Donegal defenders in the first half. However, he also gave some poor decisions against Monaghan players and one was glad that the game was not an important game as it could have got out of control. His decisions clearly upset the players also.

# Defiant Donegal denied as Armagh get out of jail

ARMAGH 0-12  
DONEGAL 0-12

Colm Keys  
Ulster SFC quarter-final

FOR all its unpalatable qualities the Ulster football championship will always retain the capacity to thrill and compel.

Donegal, so much the forgotten team of the province in the rush to acclaim the duopoly of recent All-Ireland winners, pushed Armagh to the edge of the cliff but released their grip too early, allowing the league champions to break free and survive.

For the 25,586 attendance in Clones, the script was riveting throughout, fuelled by a sending off in each half for either team that served to inspire rather than deflate.

Armagh were relieved to snatch the draw at the end but once again their ability to deal with an extra man after the sending off of an opponent, this time Donegal's Kevin Cassidy, for long spells was suspect.

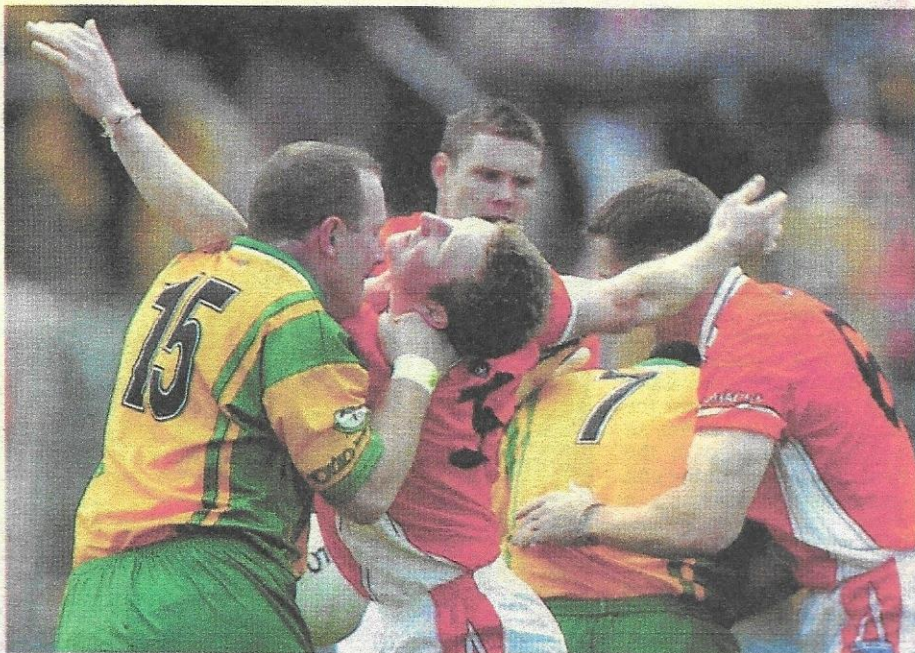
Cassidy was sent off for an incident witnessed by one of referee's Joe McQuillan's umpires after 28 minutes that left Martin O'Rourke requiring attention, the apex of one of this Ulster SFC quarter-final's most fractious periods.

Until the numbers were balanced by Armagh substitute Paddy McKeever's sending off with just over 10 minutes of normal time remaining for lashing out at Barry Monaghan Donegal were reaching out for the winning post.

Trailing by 0-6 to 0-3 and on the back foot when Cassidy walked they were 0-11 to 0-9 ahead, a five point swing in just less than 30 minutes either side of the interval.

It could be argued that Armagh were on their way back when McKeever squared the ledger. Brian Mallon had just squeezed over a point and Philip Loughran's belated introduction to prop up an ailing midfield had already reignited them.

But with 14 men Armagh threatened a winning rally with Paul McGrane and Aaron Kernan bringing them level with five minutes left.



Donegal's Adrian Sweeney gets to grips with Armagh's Francie Bellew during yesterday's Ulster championship clash in Clones. Picture: Damien Eagers/Sportsfile

Donegal's resolve was commendable from the moment they lost Cassidy and quickly they responded through Christy Toyne but an equaliser from Oisín McConville, an inconspicuous second half figure, spared them.

Once again Donegal have shown themselves to be willing competitors but one senses that after next Saturday night's replay the only real winners will be Derry.

Bitten by three successive championship defeats to Armagh, Donegal tore into the reigning Ulster champions and were untypically over physical in many of the early exchanges.

Brendan Devenney and Michael Hegarty picked up yellow cards but the aggression in the game was of little benefit. Armagh are not for pushing about.

Armagh looked comfortable and composed with Aaron Kernan, Andy Mallon, Francie Bellew and Kieran McGeeney exercising plenty of control at the back.

McConville started well, Ronan Clarke always looked to have the measure of Raymond Sweeney and two points from Steven

McDonnell in the first 24 minutes promised much.

Cassidy's sending off changed everything. Donegal reverted to type and went short, building patiently from a half-back line that quickly got on top.

By the break Armagh still looked reasonably comfortable with a 0-7 to 0-5 lead but points from the ever improving Colm McFadden from play and a free and Adrian Sweeney gave them the lead inside 40 minutes.

Armagh responded by withdrawing Paul McCormack and Cianan McKeever for the more experienced Aidan O'Rourke and Andy McCann. McCann became the third 'extra man' after McCormack and McGeeney and performed the role a little better.

Donegal pressed on and dominated the third quarter as Armagh's midfield fell apart. McFadden and Sweeney frees pushed them three points clear by the end of the third quarter.

Clarke offered a way forward with his third point, Armagh's first of the second half. Donegal kept pressing and the energetic Brian Roper fed Sweeney to restore the three point gap until Mallon began the fightback.

Armagh may win next Saturday replay but with that extra game the September road is getting longer.

**SCORERS** — Armagh: R Clarke 0-3, B Mallon, A Kernan (11), O McConville (11), S McDonnell all 0-2 each, P McGrane 0-1. Donegal: C McFadden 0-5 (41), A Sweeney 0-4 (11), B Roper, B Devenney 0-1, C Toyne all 0-1 each.

**ARMAGH** — P Hearty 8; A Mallon 8, F Bellew 7, P McCormack 6; A Kernan 8, K McGeeney 6, C McKeever 5; J Toal 7, P McGrane 7; M O'Rourke 5, J McEntee 5, O McConville 7; S McDonnell 7, R Clarke 8, B Mallon 6. **Subs:** A McCann 6 for McCormack (41), A O'Rourke 6 for (41), P McKeever 4 for Toyne (46), P Loughran 7 for McEntee (58).

**DONEGAL** — M Boyle 6; E McGee 8, B Sweeney 6, K Lacy 7; D Diver 7, B Monaghan 7, S Carr 8; N Gallagher 8; K Cassidy 6; C Toyne 6, M Hegarty 8, B Roper 7; C McFadden 8, A Sweeney 8, B Devenney 7. **Subs:** R Kavanagh for Devenney (59).

**REF** — Joe McQuillan (Cavan).

# Bank of Ireland Ulster Championship replay

**I**t was a case of de ja vous all over again in Clones, as Donegal's Ulster championship prospects were derailed by Armagh in Clones, on Saturday evening.

Tom Comack reports from Clones  
Photos by Michael O'Donnell

In an ill tempered, foul infested tie, the performance of referee Maurice Deegan, was under the microscope at the finish, with the Laois official being criticised by both camps.

In all he flashed eight yellow cards and four reds, three of them to Donegal men - Eamon McGee, Brian Roper and Adrian Sweeney. McGee and Roper saw red for second yellow card offences with Sweeney and Armagh's Francie Bellew getting straight reds.

The referee did not have a good day at the office and made umpteen bad calls and was more than a little liberal with his yellow cards. However, in his defence none of his decisions had a major bearing on the overall outcome. At best it might have been closer at the finish, but to suggest he cost Donegal the game was well wide of the mark, and ignoring the truth.

Donegal stayed with Armagh and gave as good as they got in the opening 30 minutes and were just three points adrift on the half hour mark. Ronan Clarke's fourth minute goal was the only difference between the sides with Brendan Devenney and Colm McFadden keeping their team in touch.

And it could have been oh so different if Brian Roper had taken an early opportunity for a Donegal goal. The Ballyshannon man stole in

behind the defence in the opening minute to take a pass from Christy Toye, but 'keeper Paul Hearty got down well to deflect out for a '45. This would have been a great start for Donegal and just what the doctor ordered.

But the game turned very much in favour of the Orchard county in the closing minutes of the opening half with points from Ronan Clarke and Aaron Kernan giving their team a five point half-time cushion, Armagh 1-7, Donegal 0-5.

## Bad to worse

While Donegal were still in with an outside chance at the break, it went from bad to worse in the second half. Steven McDonnell pointed early in the half to stretch the advantage out to six, before the McGee sending off.

And it got worse almost immediately after the Gweedore man's sending off, when McDonnell, who was really on top of his game, drilled to the roof of Michael Boyle's net, after being sent on his way by second half substitute Malachy Mackin. Mackin replaced the injured Ronan Clarke at half-time.

McFadden and Devenney converted two frees before Brian Roper got his marching orders on 52 minutes. And with Donegal down to 13 and looking disjointed Malachy Mackin added to the misery on 65



Armagh.....	3-11
Donegal.....	1-10

minutes, when he volleyed home Armagh's third goal and a 3-9 to an 0-7 lead. Mackin pounced after a McDonnell effort came back off the upright.

Two minutes later Donegal were down to 12 when Adrian Sweeney was red carded for an off-the-ball challenge on Kieran McGeeney. And the Dungloe man was joined on the long walk to the dressing rooms, by Francie Bellew, who was singled out in an unrelated incident.

And while Devenney polished off a good move involving Karl Lacey and Christy Toye, with a well taken goal it was only a consolation score, and gave the final scoresheet a more respectable look to it.

With the game fizzling out as a test Colm McFadden and Martin O'Rourke rounded off the scoring with two late points each.

## Shenanigans

But the shenanigans were not finished and there was quite a bit of jostling and pushing and shoving as both teams made their exit from the park. Thankfully, stewards moved in to avert a potential unsavoury incident, and calm was restored.

Donegal showed two changes from the drawn game, Niall McCready coming in for the suspended Kevin Cassidy and Brendan Boyle deputising for Raymond Sweeney, who was out with a heavy cold.

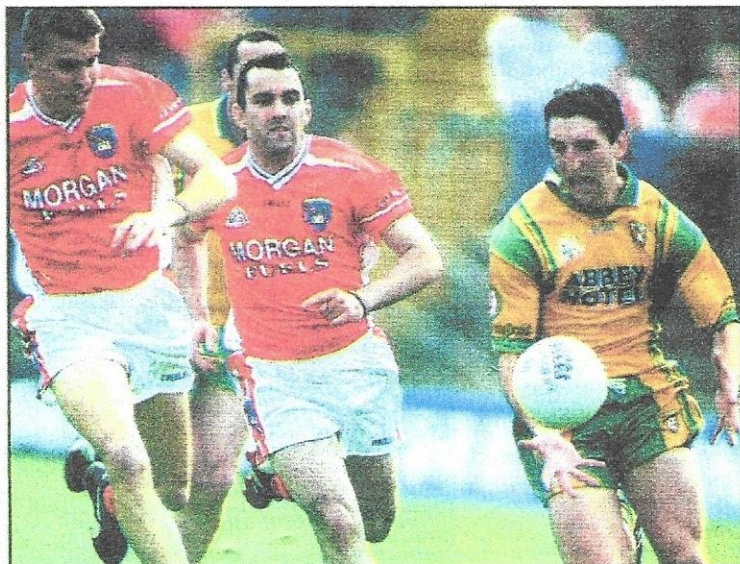
Armagh showed three alterations Enda McNulty, Andrew McCann and Philip Loughran replacing Paul McCormack, Ciaran McKeever and John Toal.

Donegal must once again dust themselves down and now go through the back door if they are to make any impression. And that begins this Sunday with a trip to Aghrim, and an away tie with Leinster minnows Wicklow.

**Armagh:** P. Hearty; A. Mallon, F. Bellew, Enda McNulty; Aaron Kernan (0-3,2F), K. McGeeney, Andrew - McCann; Philip Loughran, P. McGrane; M. O'Rourke (0-2), J. McEntee, O. McConville (0-1); S. McDonnell (1-3), R. Clarke (1-1), Brian Mallon. Subs., Malachy Mackin (1-0) for Clarke; A. O'Rourke (0-1) for McCann; Tony McEntee for J. McEntee; John Toal for McGrane; Kevin McElvanna for A Mallon.

**Donegal:** M. Boyle; N. McCready, E. McGee, K. Lacey; D. Diver, B. Monaghan, S. Carr; N. Gallagher, B. Boyle; C. Toye, M. Hegarty, B. Roper; C. McFadden (0-6F), B. Devenney (1-4F), Adrian Sweeney; Subs.: R. Kavanagh for B. Devenney. Subs., Rory Kavanagh for McCready; Stephen McDermott for B. Boyle; Barry Dunnion for Diver; Ryan Bradley for Devenney, inj.

Referee: M. Deegan (Laois)



Donegal half forward Michael Hegarty on the attack as Phillip Loughran and Martin O'Rourke give chase

# Gallagher inspired

## Donegal do just enough in Aughrim

Inspired by Neil Gallagher at midfield Donegal did just about enough to deserve victory in the sweltering heat of Aughrim on Sunday.

Peter Campbell reports from Aughrim

Photos by Brian McDaid

A packed ground of around 8,000 were treated to an exciting contest which seemed to be going Donegal's way early in the second half but was in the melting pot until the final minutes thanks to a Wicklow resurgence.

A reasonable Donegal crowd travelled and they were given a great Wicklow welcome. Raphoe piper, Christy Murray, entertained the travelling support in the village prior to the game and then gave the Rathdrum Pipe Band some assistance in the pre-match parade, bringing their number up to eight!

It all added to an atmosphere that was far removed from what we expect in Clones. There was much less needle both on and off the field!

Donegal had to travel to Tullow on Saturday night to get accommodation due to all the big events around the Capital. That journey along with their tough games against Armagh looked to have dulled their energy levels.

### Under pressure

Wicklow tore into them at the start and were swamping them at times, but eventually Donegal came to terms with the game in the second quarter and really could have had the game wrapped up by the three-quarter stage.

The main reason they came good was a towering display at midfield by Glenswilly's Neil Gallagher, who continues to grow into his role at midfield. The number of high catches won by Gallagher must have been into double figures - a very rare occurrence in any game.

However, it was not just Gallagher's high fetching which impressed. He worked tirelessly and selfishly on the ground and was responsible for starting many of the Donegal scores.

Donegal only got their noses in front for the first time a couple of minutes before the break and even though they opened a four point gap early in the second half, Wicklow had the margin back to the minimum within minutes.

It was encouraging to see Donegal respond when Wicklow threatened but one felt that they should have won this game a little easier.

What will make Donegal mentors and supporters fret most over the next week is that Gallagher had to forge alone at midfield. The Donegal defence came under severe pressure at various times in the game with the full-back line

in big trouble in the opening ten minutes while Barry Monaghan had a very difficult time at centre-half until he was moved in the last ten minutes.

Donegal used the tactic of a two-man full-forward line in the opening half with Adrian Sweeney withdrawn. The move curtailed Sweeney's influence and left him peripheral to the action. There were snatches from the inside duo but both took wrong options at different times. The fact that they only managed a point between them from play over the 70 minutes shows that there is still need for improvement in this area.

### Threatened

At times Donegal needed leadership when Wicklow threatened and to be fair some players stepped up the mark. Michael Hegarty was always looking to get on the ball; Damien Diver showed up well in the second half and eventually Karl Lacey and Eamon McGee got to grips in the full-back line.

But without the influence of big Gallagher at midfield Donegal would have been in trouble in this game and could have suffered an embarrassing defeat.

It is difficult to quantify the

opposition. This is a relatively new and young Wicklow side but they showed scant regard for Donegal throughout. Raymond Sweeney was back at full-back for Donegal after his viral problem and had trouble with a lively Wayne O'Gorman. But to be fair to Sweeney, he showed great persistence and eventually got on top in the final quarter, which is good news because we found out how much we missed the Dungloe man in the Armagh replay.

### Tough games

After three tough games in as many weeks, Donegal will need little training this week before facing Cavan again next Saturday. They are building up a little head of steam but will need to get more scores from play from their front men and also cut down on the wides tally, which reached ten in Aughrim.

**Wicklow:** Robert Hollingsworth; Ciaran Hvland (0-1), Brendan Daly,

Tom Burke; Kevin Manning, Wesley Callaghan, Brendan O hAnnaidh (0-1); David Dillon, James Stafford; David Smullen, Leighton Glynn (0-1), Thomas Harney (0-2); Paul Earls (0-1,f), Wayne O'Gorman (0-2), Alan Ellis. Subs., Gary Duffy (0-1) for Dillon (25); Jonathan Daniels (0-3,1f) for Earls (40); Darragh O'Sullivan for Ellis ((45); Clive Davis for O hAnnaidh (62); Gary Doran for Smullen (69).

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Eamon McGee, Raymond Sweeney, Karl Lacey; Damien Diver (0-1), Barry Monaghan, Shane Carr; Stephen McDermott (0-2), Neil Gallagher; Christy Toye (0-2), Michael Hegarty, Brian Roper (0-1); Colm McFadden (0-5,4f), Adrian Sweeney (0-1), Brendan Devenney (0-4, 4f). Subs., Rory Kavanagh for Roper (52); Brendan Boyle for McDermott (57); Ryan Bradley for Toye (63); Conal Molloy for A. Sweeney (69); Niall McCready for Monaghan (71).

**Referee:** Gearoid O Conamha (Galway)

Wicklow.....0-12  
Donegal.....0-16



Michael Hegarty holds off his man in Wicklow

# Donegal flags are put back in mothballs for another year following the senior footballers' Championship exit on Sunday afternoon, at the hands of Cavan in Kingspan Breffni Park.

Tom Comack reports  
Photos by Michael O' Donnell

And it is another case of one of those that got away. Despite playing for only the closing quarter Donegal, came agonisingly close to pulling it out of the fire.

Cavan, who suffered a twenty one point hammering by Tyrone eight days earlier in their Ulster semi-final replay, showed remarkable powers of recovery to put Donegal to the sword.

The victory was no more than the Breffni men deserved. They were the better team for three quarters of the tie, and it was only in the closing 20 minutes that Donegal made a game of it.

A Brendan Devenney goal fifteen minutes into the second period heralded the arrival of Donega, in Breffni Park. Up to that they were not in the game, and were trailing 1-8 to 0-5, when Devenney struck.

The St. Eunan man's goal, out of nothing, sparked a revival that saw the Tirconail boys - despite their poor showing - come agonisingly close to winning. And it took two wonder saves from Cavan keeper James Reilly, in the closing minutes to deny a rampant Donegal.

## Wonder saves

With the home team leading by four points, 1-11 to 1-7, Reilly dived full length on 65 minutes to deny Colm McFadden, who had only the keeper to beat. And six minutes later Reilly stood between Donegal and the equalising score when he saved from Brendan Devenney's penalty strike. If one of these had gone in, Donegal would have probably gone on to win the tie.

And even at that, with Devenney knocking over two injury time points they came oh so close, and if the game had lasted a few more minutes who knows what might have happened.

In truth, Cavan had their moments too, and like Donegal had a number of good goal chances. In the first half, and before Larry Reilly struck gold, Karl Lacey took a ball off the line, also from Reilly, fifteen minutes into the game. And again three minutes into the second half Michael Boyle brought off a brilliant save from Nicholas Walsh.

All in all, Cavan were the better side, they picked up all the breaks around midfield, and had more purpose about them when the went on the attack. And even after Devenney's goal they responded almost immediately with the scores to keep a safe distance between the teams.

# Bank of Ireland SFC Round Two Qualifier



Dermot McCabe, Nicholas Walsh, Jason and Larry Reilly, Anthony Forde and Finbar Reilly, were all in illuminating form for the winners. With the exception of Karl Lacey and Brendan Devenney, who only came good in the closing 20 minutes, and to a lesser extent Shane Carr and Damian Diver, few Donegal reputations were enhanced.

Cavan had the better of the first half and deservedly led 1-6 to 0-2 at half time. Larry Reilly bagged the goal bang in the middle of the half, to propel his side into a 1-4 to 0-1 lead. The corner forward was sent on his way by Mark McKeever after Jason Reilly broke the ball away from Donegal's, Raymond Sweeney.

Finbar Reilly, with three pointed frees, Jason Reilly and McKeever, a point each were the Breffni scorers. Brian Roper, from play on two minutes and Colm McFadden from a free on 23 minutes were the Donegal marksmen.

## Lifeline

While Donegal fared better on the resumption and hit three points to Cavan's two, the home county were still in control and 1-8 to 0-5 in front when Devenney struck for the Donegal goal. The full-forward got away with a push on full back Darren Rabbitt, pounced when the ball broke in the Cavan area to throw his side a lifeline.

With the margin down to three points, 1-8 to 1-5, Donegal were back in the contest. But it was a four point game again two minutes later when Cavan broke up field and Finbar O'Reilly landed his second point from play in quick succession. And with Devenney and Larry Reilly and Colm McFadden and Finbar O'Reilly trading scores Cavan maintained their four point advantage right up to the closing minutes, when hero Reilly stepped up to the mark to pull off those two match winning saves.

Cavan scorers: Finbar O'Reilly (0-6,4F), Larry Reilly (1-2), Mark

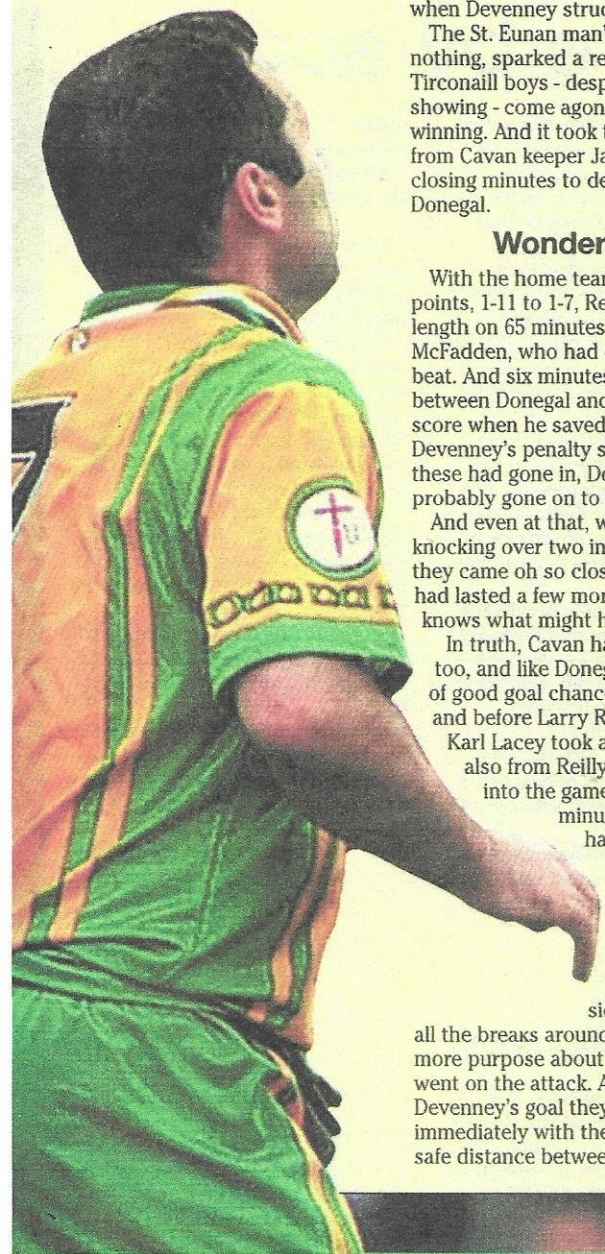
McKeever (0-1F), J Reilly (0-1), A Forde (0-1).

Donegal scorers: Brendan Devenney (1-5,2F), Colm McFadden (0-3F), Brian Roper (0-1), Adrian Sweeney (0-1).

**Cavan:** James Reilly; Michael Hannon, Darren Rabbitt, Pauric O'Reilly; Martin Cahill, Anthony Forde, Peter Reilly; Dermot McCabe, Pierce McKenna; Mark McKeever, Nicholas Walsh, Finbar O'Reilly; Jason O'Reilly, Micky Graham, Larry Reilly. Subs: Michael Lyng for M. Graham; Seanie Johnson for L. Reilly; Paddy Brady for D. McCabe;

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Eamon McGee, Raymond Sweeney, Karl Lacey; Damian Diver, Barry Monaghan, Shane Carr; Stephen McDermott, Neil Gallagher; Christy Toye, Michael Hegarty, Brian Roper; Colm McFadden, Adrian Sweeney, Brendan Devenney. Subs: Conal Dunne for A Sweeney; Brendan Dunnion for P Monaghan; Ryan Bradley for M Hegarty.

**Referee:** Eugene Murtagh (Longford).





<b>DONEGAL</b> .....	<b>0-10</b>
<b>TYRONE</b> .....	<b>1-11</b>

Tuesday, 8th February, 2005

## Allianz National Football League Round One

**W**ith just three points from play Donegal paid the price by losing a game that they could have, at least, shared against Tyrone in MacCumhaill Park on Sunday.

Peter Campbell reports from MacCumhaill Park

Photos by Thomas Gallagher

Two first half goal chances and another in the second half went abegging as well as some very poor shooting left them playing catch-up for most of the game.

Despite that they showed remarkable resilience in the second half to twice get the margin down to a point, but in the final analysis they lacked that little bit of class to tilt the game in their favour.

The game saw was the first opportunity for followers to see the new experimental rules and it was evident that one of the main results is that the game is much faster. However, there is a grey area around the pick-up as players were diving in to stop opponents gaining possession, which led to some unseemly tussles which led to the ball being thrown up.

The rules have, however, made players think about their tackling and from this game and the two we saw on TG4 on Friday and Saturday night, one positive is that the tactic of stopping the player who makes the pass has been minimised.

By the final whistle three players had been yellow carded, with Brendan Donnelly first to go on 17 minutes, for stopping a Brian Roper run.

Donegal lost midfielder, Neil Gallagher on 30 minutes when he was guilty of a high tackle and his loss had an unsettling effect as he was performing well in a withdrawn role.

### Goal chances

Donegal were two points adrift at the break - 0-7 to 0-5 - after starting well and leading by 0-3 to 0-1 after 18 minutes.

Tyrone were much better in the second quarter with Stephen O'Neill and Eoin Mulligan going well, benefiting from a great supply from human dynamo, Brian Dooher.

Donegal lined out with Brian Roper on the '40' with Christy Toye inside. Roper was one of the Donegal successes but it was mainly through the boot of Colm McFadden from placed balls that Donegal kept in touch.

Donegal's only point from play in the opening half came from Rory Kavanagh in the 9th minute, which cancelled an opening point from Mulligan. Two McFadden frees edged them ahead but Stephen

O'Neill, Ryan Mellon and Mulligan found the range by the 24th minute to put the Red Hand men two up.

Before half-time McFadden and O'Neill traded points before Peter Donnelly put Tyrone three up on 28 minutes. However, before the break McFadden converted another free to reduce the margin to two.

Donegal had created two good goal chances in the opening half. The first came when Brian Roper threw two dummies before hitting Colm McFadden with a perfect ball, but McFadden lost concentration and dropped the pass and the chance was gone.

### Run on goal

Some minutes later Christy Toye was on a run on goal but Stephen Cassidy delayed the pass and the ball arrived when Toye was checking his options. Just before the break Brendan Devenney came in for Donegal but failed to convert a very kickable free.

The early stages of the second half saw Tyrone twice open the margin to three points through the boot of Mulligan and O'Neill, but Colm McFadden cancelled those with two frees.

Rory Kavanagh had a chance to put Donegal in front on 50 minutes but his effort for goal found the side netting. Almost immediately after good work by Ryan Bradley, Stephen McDermott pointed and the margin was down to one.

Stephen O'Neill responded with a mighty free from outside the 45m line but Tyrone lost a second player when Shane Sweeney (who had replaced Donnelly) was shown yellow for an off-the-ball offence on Brian Roper, that could easily have seen red.

A foul on Brendan Devenney saw McFadden point on 62 minutes to again reduce the margin to the minimum and Donegal had enough possession to draw level, but lacked that little bit of class at the vital moment.

Tyrone broke up field for substitute Davy Harte to hit a good point and a two point lead and two minutes from the end another break saw Sean Cavanagh break through. He found Stephen O'Neill, who transferred to Colm McCullagh for a simple goal, even though McCullagh seemed to be standing well inside the 'square' when he got possession. Before

the end Donegal got a consolation point through Barry Monaghan.

Tyrone won because they had the great threat up front. They won because they had a player of the calibre of Brian Dooher to keep pushing them forward and asking questions of a Donegal defence that performed reasonably well.

Donegal's eight wides (six in the first half) and numerous efforts that fell short into the 'keeper's grateful hands were a major factor. They created three good goal chances, but didn't even hit the target once. However, there were encouraging signs, not least in the work ethic and a real willingness to give it a lash.

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Niall McCready; Raymond Sweeney; Damien Diver; Eamon McGee; Barry Monaghan (0-1); Shane Carr; Neil Gallagher; Kevin Cassidy; Rory Kavanagh; Brian Roper; Stephen McDermott (0-1); Stephen Cassidy; Colm McFadden (0-7, all frees); Christy Toye. Subs., Karl Lacey for Diver (25); Brendan Devenney for S. Cassidy (29); Ryan Bradley for Gallagher (31); Barry Dunnion for Cavanagh (61).

**Tyrone:** Pascal McConnell; Ryan McMenamin; Chris Lawn; Eoghan Bradley; Brian Robinson; Gavin Devlin; Brendan Donnelly; Brian Meenan; Peter Donnelly (0-1); Brian Dooher; Stephen O'Neill (0-4, 2f); Sean Cavanagh; Michael Coleman; Owen Mulligan (0-4, 2f); Ryan Mellon. Subs., Shane Sweeney for Donnelly (17); Colm McCullough (1-0) for Coleman (24); Conor Gormley for Bradley (42); Joe McMahan for Donnelly (55); Davy Harte (0-1) for Sweeney (58); Peter Donnelly for Meenan (69).

**Referee:** Jimmy McKee (Armagh).

Mayo.....2-10 Donegal.....1-11

## Allianz National League Division 1A

**F**or the second week in-a-row Donegal were bemoaning what might have been on Sunday evening, as they once again lost a game they should have taken something from.

Tom Comack reports from Ballina  
Photos: Thomas Gallagher

Last Sunday week, in Ballybofey, a late Colm McCullagh goal left Brian McEniff and his players reeling. This time around in Stephenite Park, Ballina, Mayo repeated the dose. Two late pointed frees from Alan Dillon bagged two precious league points for the home team.

And as was the case seven days earlier, Donegal had no one to blame but themselves, as they had two late chances to, at least, get a share of the points.

Both Rory Kavanagh and Michael Hegarty

squandered good possession, with Kavanagh, in particular, guilty of not taking a point when through on goals three minutes from the end.

The Eunans man had a goal on his mind, but ended up with nothing and only a point between the teams, while Hegarty shortly afterwards kicked away possession from a free inside the Connacht champions half.

Donegal lived dangerously in the opening exchanges and were a little fortunate to be only three down, 0-1 to 0-4 at the end of the first quarter. Mayo had two good goal chances in the opening ten minutes.

### Blasted over

Michael Boyle got down well to deny Conor Mortimer six minutes into the game, and two minutes later John Prenty, blasted over the bar with a goal at his mercy. Prenty's strike, his side's opening score, cancelled out Brian Roper's volleyball style opener on four minutes.

Mayo were edging the midfield at this stage and with Ciaran McDonald, spraying the ball around, they knocked over three rapid fire points in three minutes, before Ryan Bradley halted their march with a superb point from play. And the Buncrana man swiftly added

another, this time from a free, to reduce the margin to the minimum on 17 minutes.

And it was game on when Barry Monaghan strode forward on 22 minutes, to tie up the game on 0-4 each. While Mayo responded with three quick points, Donegal were still in the contest at the half-time break, trailing by a single point, 0-6 to 0-7 thanks to scores from Rory Kavanagh and Colm McFadden.

Rory Kavanagh got Donegal off to the perfect start on the resumption, with the equaliser inside one minute. And it got even better for the visitors on 47 minutes when Monaghan once again joined the attack to split the town end goals and a 0-8 to 0-7 lead for Donegal.

But that advantage was short lived. Within a minute Michael Boyle was plucking the ball out of the net, after Conor and Trevor Mortimer combined for the blonde bomber Conor to palm to the Donegal net.

And it got even better for the men in red and green in the early minutes of the final quarter when Alan Dillon managed to scramble the ball over the line after Conor Mortimer broke the ball into his path. Dillon's goal stretched the Mayo lead out to six points, with 16 minutes remaining.

The Westeners' may have thought they had the points in the bag, but Donegal had other ideas and instead of rolling over and dying, they took the fight to their hosts. Ryan Bradley converted from a 35 metre free, and Brian Roper from play made it a four point game, before Christy Toye slid the ball wide of David Clarke to reduce the gap to the minimum.

### All square

Toye's goal polished of a sweeping move involving Neil Gallagher and Rory Kavanagh. And when Kavanagh knocked over his third, it was all square for a third time, 1-11 to 2-8,

and the momentum was with the visitors.

With the game on a knife edge Alan Dillon struck for the first of his two late frees on 65 minutes. Kavanagh, after a great run, fluffed a great chance before being disposed by James Nallen close to the Mayo posts.

### Final nail

Dillon, who had a great second half when moved to the half forward line, drove the final nail when he knocked over a 30 metre free with just two minutes remaining. Donegal had one late chance to engineer something, but Hegarty's kick into space was not read by the inside men and the chance was gone as the ball trickled out wide.

So with two defeats from two outings Donegal are firmly rooted to the bottom of the table, and with three weeks to the next game against Westmeath in Mullingar, Brian McEniff will be glad of the break as he bids to gee up his side for the second half

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Eamon Reddin, Raymond Sweeney, Karl Lacey; Eamon McGee, Barry Monaghan (0-2), Shane Carr; Neil Gallagher, Kevin Cassidy; Christy Toye (1-0), Brian Roper (0-2), Ryan Bradley (0-3,2F); Rory Kavanagh (0-3), Colm McFadden (0-1F), Stephen Cassidy. Subs: Michael Hegarty for S Cassidy; B Dunning for E Reddin; C Dunne for R Bradley;

**Mayo:** David Clarke; Keith Higgins, Pat Kelly, Liam O'Malley; Gary Mullins (0-1), James Nallen, Peadar Gardiner; Billy Joe Padden, James Kilcullen; James Gill (0-2), Ciaran McDonald, Aidan Kilcoyne; Conor Mortimer (1-4), Alan Dillon (1-2F), John Prenty (0-1). Subs: Trevor Mortimer for A Kilcoyne; Conor Moran for G Mullin; Andy Moran for J Prenty.

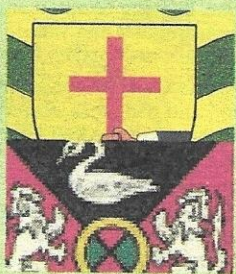
**Referee:** David Goldrick (Meath)



## National Football League Division 1A

**DONEGAL** .....1-11  
**WESTMEATH** .....1-12

Peter Campbell reports from  
Cusack Park, Mullingar  
Photos by Thomas Gallagher



# Donegal remain pointless and strong candidates for relegation after they failed to take their chances in Mullingar against Westmeath on Sunday.

A goal chance went abegging early in the second half when Michael Hegarty hit the upright when clean through and when they lead by 1-9 to 1-7 in the 49th minute they hit three bad wides in as many minutes and they were made pay for their wastage.

Three defeats in-a-row by four, two and now one point leaves Donegal rooted to the bottom of Division 1A and it will take improvement in the finishing department to see Donegal escape.

The big difference between the teams on Sunday was one Dessie Dolan. From the start he was a thorn in the Donegal side and although Niall McCreeady did a reasonably good job of keeping tabs on him, when Westmeath were in trouble entering the final quarter, he withdrew to the half-back line and played a real leader's part in closing the deal.

Donegal had their chances when they lead twice by two points in the second half but, as in their other games, that little bit of leadership and accuracy was not shown when required.

Before an attendance of 5,325, the game was always lively and very open with both defences under pressure from the throw-in. Goal

chances were plentiful and it is probably an indictment of the front men that only two were taken over the 70+ minutes.

The frontline duo of Dolan and Alan Mangan kept Donegal on their toes from the start and both had points in the opening minutes, Dolan's effort going just over the crossbar.

Donegal's first attack saw Stephen McDermott find Rory Kavanagh with nobody within 20 metres and he waltzed through only to be brought down by James Davitt for a penalty. Davitt became the first of six to be yellow-carded, but young Ryan Bradley's penalty came back off the upright to the relief of the home support.

## Made no mistake

At the other end Michael Boyle denied Martin Flanagan another goal before McDermott again opened up the Westmeath defence, sending Colm McFadden through and he made no mistake.

From then the game settled a little with points traded, Dessie Dolan getting two for Westmeath while Stephen McDermott, Colm McFadden.

That trend continued with Ryan Bradley and Joe Fallon exchanging points before Rory Kavanagh fisted Donegal into a 1-5 to 0-5 lead on 29 minutes.

Westmeath struck for their goal two minutes later with Alan Mangan involved before Dessie Dolan broke through to fire home. Before the break points were traded again by Colm McFadden and Joe Fallon to leave the half-time score: Westmeath 1-6. Donegal 1-6.

The tit-for-tat trend continued with Stephen McDermott and Daniel McDermott pointing inside the first two minutes of the second half.

Donegal had a great goal chance on 38 minutes when Michael Hegarty broke through only to see his effort come back off the bottom of the upright.

Points from Brendan Devenney and Colm McFadden (frees) pushed Donegal two clear only for Dessie Dolan to win and point a free at the other end.

Michael Hegarty again eased Donegal two clear on 50 minutes and it was at this stage that McFadden, McDermott and Kavanagh missed three relatively easy opportunities to open up a critical gap.

Donegal were made pay as Westmeath finished stronger with points from Denis Glennon, two from the impressive Joe Fallon and a final point from Patrick Mulvihill.

## Clutching at straws

Donegal were clutching at straws in the closing stages but all they could muster was a Michael Hegarty point in injury time.

The game saw six yellow cards - three for each side: James Davitt, Rory O'Connell, James Keane (Westmeath); Raymond Sweeney, Niall McCreeady, Brendan Devenney (Donegal).

**Westmeath:** Gary Connaughton; James Davitt, Donal O'Donoghue, James Keane; Michael Ennis, Damien Healy, Derek Heavin; Rory O'Connell, John Brennan; David Mitchell, Martin Flanagan, Colin Galligan; Alan Mangan (0-1), Denis Glennon (0-1), Dessie Dolan (1-4, 2f). Subs., David Kilmartin for Davitt; Joe Fallon (0-4, f, 45') for Galligan; Daniel McDermott (0-1) for Heavin; Denis Glennon for Mitchell; David O'Shaughnessy for Brennan; Patrick Mulvihill (0-1) for O'Connell.

**Donegal:** Michael Boyle; Niall McCreeady, Raymond Sweeney, Eamon McGee; Shane Carr, Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy; Neil Gallagher, Stephen McDermott (0-2); Rory Kavanagh (0-2), Michael Hegarty (0-2), Brian Roper; Colm McFadden (1-3, 2f), B. Devenney (0-1, f), R. Bradley (0-1). Subs., Karl Lacey for R. Sweeney, 18; Barry Dunnion for McCreeady, 45; Adrian Sweeney for Bradley, 50; Christy Toyne for Roper, 60; Martin Caulfield for Devenney, 71.

Referee: P. Russell (Tipperary).

## Man of the match

**This was easy. Dessie Dolan was head and shoulders above the rest. Without him Westmeath would have not have won. On the Donegal side Eamon McGee was easily the most successful defender while many of the team had good and bad moments.**

## Turning Point

**The three missed opportunities for points for Donegal midway through the half. One felt at the time that it was a turning point and it turned out that way.**

## Ref watch

**Donegal could have few complaints with Tipperary official, Pat Russell. He wasn't a home town referee and kept good control on the game.**

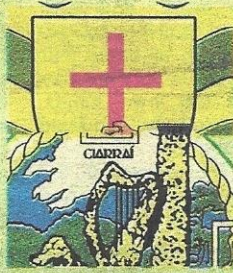


■ Brendan Devenney struggles to get away from the clutches of John Keane. (0803TG22)

## National Football League Division 1A

**DONEGAL** .....1-10  
**KERRY** .....1-09

Tom Comack reports from  
MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey  
Photos by Brian McDaid



**W**hen Donegal do things, they tend to do them in style. And this was very much the case on Sunday afternoon in Ballybofey, when they picked up their first league points of the campaign and in the process took the scalp of none other than All-Ireland champions, Kerry, in the process.

After narrow defeats at the hands of Tyrone, Mayo and Westmeath, this triumph, as slender and all as it was, was no more than this side deserved. It may not have been the greatest league game ever played in Sean MacCumhaill Park, but few Donegal fans were complaining at the finish. And it was relief as much as anything that greeted the final whistle.

Relief that a mostly young and inexperienced team had come so agonisingly close in their three previous outings and had something to show for their effort. The fact that it was the All Ireland champions was the bonus, and should work wonders for confidence.

While they might have lived dangerously in the closing minutes and did not score for the closing seventeen minutes or so, this victory was thoroughly deserved, with once again the young guns living up to the challenge.

And in this department Eamon McGee, Neil Gallagher, Rory Kavanagh, Colm McFadden and Paul Durcan really stepped up to the mark, and along with Niall McCreehy and Michael Hegarty are the reason the team have two league points to their name on the Division 1A league table.

But as has been the norm so far in the season they did make life

difficult for themselves by shooting ten wides in the second half and 14 in all.

There was little between the teams in the opening quarter with scoring chances few and far between as the defences held the upper hand. Donegal lead 0-2 to 0-0 after eight minutes, Ryan Bradley from a free on three minutes, and Rory Kavanagh, from play, five minutes later getting their team off the mark.

### All square

But it was all square at the end of the first quarter Colm Cooper on 11 minutes and Paddy Kelly on 14, the Kerry scorers. And the visitors were in front for the only time in the game by the 21 st., minute, when Ronan O'Connor converted a 40 metre free. O'Connor's strike, against the run of play, splitting the posts seconds after Bradley missed a great opportunity at the other end.

Despite conceding territorial advantage around midfield Donegal were back in the driving seat when Calm McFadden bagged their goal on 23 minutes. The corner forward doing well to slide home soccer style from a tight angle, after he was sent clear by Rory Kavanagh.

Spurred into action by McFadden's three pointer, and the introduction of Dara O Cinneide, Kerry, upped their game. And playing with a new found urgency they were back on

level terms again with two minutes remaining in the half, O Cinneide, with two superb points, and Declan Quill, doing the business on the scoreboard.

However, Donegal had their noses in front at the break thanks to two late points from Michael Hegarty, and Kavanagh to lead 1-5 to 0-6.

And the home team had extended their advantage out to three points by the 43rd minutes courtesy of two Bradley points, to one from the excellent O Cinneide.

But just when they Tir Conaill supporters began to harbour any notion of victory they were rocked when Eoin Brosnan rattled Paul Durcan's net at the end of the third quarter to tie up the game on 1-7 each. Brosnan raced onto a Colm Cooper, cross after he was gifted possession by Shane Carr, and from close range, the centre forward made no mistake. Game on again!

### Great save

Five minutes later Kerry almost scored a second goal, when Durcan denied O Cinneide - the 'keeper diving at the boot of the full forward, to pull off a top class save out Donegal broke up field and Michael Hegarty knocked over a crucial point to put his side back in front and with the scent of victory in the air Christy Toye immediately added a second to give his team a two point cushion.

### Man of match

Michael Hegarty scored three great points and from the moment he got going at the start of the second quarter so too did Donegal. He is the vital link between defence and attack and seems to make this team tick. Thankfully, he looks to have the appetite back which is good news all round. He gets the nod ahead of Niall McCreehy, Eamon McGee, Neil Gallagher and Rory Kavanagh. Dara O Cinneide and Colm Cooper were the only Kerry players in contention.

### Turning Point

Paul Durcan's second half save at the feet of Dara O Cinneide was without question the turning point. With the teams locked on 1-7 each, and five minutes after Eoin Brosnan had raised the green flag Durcan got down to deny O Cinneide. A Kerry goal at that stage would have been a killer blow and could have very well caused Donegal heads drop.

### Ref Watch

Meath official Seamus McCormack did make a few questionable calls, and missed a few dodgy hand passes. But lucky for him they did not have a major bearing on the outcome, though I did think that the last Kerry free was a late late call; in fairness he was probably giving the Gooch time to get to his feet.

Cooper did pull one back for the visitors but McFadden restored his team's two point advantage with fifteen minutes remaining, 1-10 to 1-8. But while they failed to score again in the closing seventeen minutes, all Kerry could muster was a Cooper 14 metre free. Not a great return for reigning league and All Ireland champions, and does say a fair deal about the current state of health of the double champions.

**Donegal:** Paul Durcan; Niall McCreehy; Raymond Sweeney; Eamon McGee; Shane Carr, Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy; Stephen McDermott, Neil Gallagher; Christy Toye (0-1), Michael Hegarty (0-3), Brian Roper; Colm McFadden (1-2,1F), Ryan Bradley (0-3F), Rory Kavanagh (0-1). Subs: Damien Diver for B Roper; Barry Dunnion for S McDermott:

**Kerry:** Diarmuid Murphy; Mark O Sé, Michael McCarty, Mossie Lyons; Tomas O Sé, Eamonn Fitzmaurice; Aidan Mahony; Darragh O Sé, Michael Quirke; Paul Galvin, Eoin Brosnan (1-0), Paddy Kelly (0-1); Declan Quill (0-1F), Ronan O Connor (0-1F), Colm Cooper (0-3,1F); Subs: Dara O Cinneide (0-3) for R O'Connor; William Kirby for M Quirke; Seamus Moynihan for M Lyons, Liam Hasset for P Kelly; Kieran Donaghy for D Quill; Brendan Guiney for M O'Sé.

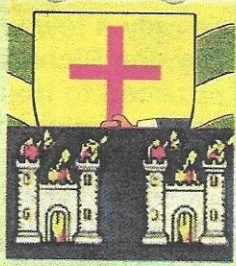
**Referee:** Michael McCormack (Meath)

## National Football League Division 1A

**DUBLIN** .....1-11  
**DONEGAL** .....0-13

Tom Comack reports from  
Parnell Park, Dublin

Photos by Thomas Gallagher



### Donegal were robbed of at least a draw when Tomás Quinn converted a late '45 to earn the Dubs a sensational victory in Parnell Park, on Sunday afternoon.

The '45, on the stroke of full-time, was controversially awarded by referee Michael Ryan, who overruled his umpire, after a high ball broke between Barry Dunnion and Jason Sherlock, and seemed to go out wide. It most definitely looked a wide ball from my vantage point, with the Dublin forward appearing to let possession slip through his hands.

But the official saw it otherwise, and Quinn held his nerve to coolly slot the resultant free over to hand his side the victory. It certainly was a big call and denied Donegal a precious point that could prove costly at the end of the season.

It was heartbreaking for Donegal, who lost Niall McCreehy just before the game with a groin strain, Paul Durcan, Stephen McDermott and Raymond Sweeney to yellow cards - Durcan and McDermott in the first half and Sweeney in the early minutes of the second. McCreehy was replaced by Damian Diver, with Karl Lacey coming in for McDermott and Eamon Reddan deputising for Sweeney.

And the defeat must be particularly hard to take for Christy Toye, Colm McFadden, Michael Hegarty, Brian Roper and Michael Boyle who were simply outstanding on the day.

St. Michael's pair, Toye and McFadden, were on top of their game from the first whistle to the last, while Boyle, who took over in goals from Durcan after 10 minutes, brought off three saves in the second half that were off the top shelf.

### Half-time lead

Donegal led by two points at the break, 0-8 to 0-6 after a very evenly contested first half with points from Christy Toye (3), Michael Hegarty (2), Colm McFadden (2), and Ryan Bradley. Tomas Quinn, 0-3, two from frees, Ciaran Whelan (2) and Mark Vaughan, the Dublin scorers. The sides were level on five occasions in the opening 35 minutes with the lead swapping hands four times.

Mark Vaughan opened the Dublin account inside a minute, but Donegal were in front by the seventh minute thanks to Christy Toye and Colm McFadden.

Despite taking a bit of a hammering around the middle of the park, where Ciaran Whelan was in flying form, Donegal still led 0-6 to 0-4 by the twenty minute mark, Michael Hegarty, Toye and McFadden doing the business on the scoreboard.

And while Whelan and Quinn hit back with points, Donegal were in front at the break with Hegarty and Toye extending the lead out to 0-8 to 0-6

Hegarty and Brian Roper traded scores with Darren Homan and Conal Keaney in the opening minutes of the second half as Donegal maintained their two point advantage. Whelan reduced the gap to a single point before Quinn tucked away a penalty on 45 minutes after Conal Keaney was impeded by Raymond Sweeney, who picked up a yellow card for the offence.

Quinn's penalty propelled the Sky Blues into a 1-9 to 0-10 lead and a two point advantage for the first time in the game. And while both McFadden and Bradley squandered a number of good chances, Donegal refused to buckle and they were back on level terms in the early minutes of the third quarter, Toye and McFadden splitting the posts.

### Back in the groove

And they were back in the groove and in front when Brendan Devenney set up Rory Kavanagh for the lead point with fifteen minutes remaining.

But sadly that was Donegal's last score as the Metropolitan's upped their game with Jason Sherlock, in particular, causing problems.

Boyle got down well to deny Conal Keaney on the hour mark and again seven minutes later, this time to pull off a wonder save from Quinn. In between Bryan Cullen joined the attack to knock over the equaliser.

With both sides having chances for the lead score, the game was heading for a draw when the referee intervened to hand Quinn the chance on seventy minutes and from the 45, the sharpshooter made no mistake to give his team the win their display scarcely deserved.

**Dublin:** Stephen Cluxton; Paul Griffin, Paddy Christie, Stephen O'Shaughnessy; Paul Casey, Bryan Cullen (0-1), Peadar Andrews; Ciaran Whelan (0-3), Darren Homan (0-1); Colin Moran, Shane Ryan, Declan Lally; Mark Vaughan (0-1), Conal Keaney (0-1), Tomás Quinn (1-4, goal from penalty, 3F). Subs: Senan Connell for S Ryan; Jason Sherlock for M Vaughan; Coman Goggins for P Griffin.

**Donegal:** Paul Durcan; Damien Diver, Raymond Sweeney, Eamon McGee; Shane Carr, Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy; Neil Gallagher, Stephen McDermott; Christy Toye (0-4), Michael Hegarty (0-3), Brian Roper (0-1); Colm McFadden (0-2, 1F), Ryan Bradley (0-2F), Rory Kavanagh (0-1). Subs: Karl Lacey for S McDermott, Barry Dunnion for D Diver; Eamon Reddan for R Sweeney; Brendan Devenney for Bradley; Adrian Sweeney for Roper.

## The Marksman

**Paul Durcan:** Very unlucky to be sent off after 10 minutes as he no more than seemed to collide with Keaney on his way out after taking ball under his on crossbar. 5

**Damian Diver:** He was in trouble in the opening minutes, looked a little more comfortable when moved to half-back line, before being replaced at half-time. 5

**Raymond Sweeney:** He was brilliant in the first half and was, without question, Donegal's best defender until he got his marching orders, ten minutes into the second half after impeding Conal Keaney. 7

**Eamon McGee:** Playing his second match in 24 hours did a good job when moved to marshal Mark Vaughan in the early minutes; seemed to lose concentration in the second half. 6

**Shane Carr:** Shane came into his own when moved to corner back in the opening minutes and made one great block on a Ciaran Whelan shot in the first half that had goal written all over it. 6

**Barry Monaghan:** He was doing well on Shane Ryan until he (Ryan) was yellow carded, and overall had a reasonably good game. 6

**Kevin Cassidy:** After a quiet first half both at half back and midfield he played much better in the second half and definitely curbed the effect of Ciaran Whelan, who was rampant in the opening half. 7

**Neil Gallagher:** While he made one or two good fetches he struggled big time on Ciaran Whelan in the first half and got little change out of Darren Homan in the second. 5

**Stephen McDermott:** Again was a little unfortunate to pick up his yellow card after catching Whelan with a high tackle. He was playing much better than the previous week and was on the ball on a fair bit in the 17 minutes he was on the field. 5

**Christy Toye:** Without question Christy's best game of the season so far as he roamed all over the forward line causing all sorts of problems for the Dublin defence. He kicked four fine points and was only nipped for the man of the match award by Michael Boyle. 8

**Michael Hegarty:** Took up where he left off last week, really on song and ended up with three points. 8

**Brian Roper:** A much improved performance from the previous week and worked his socks off from the first whistle until replaced in the closing minutes. 7

**Colm McFadden:** Like his clubmate Christy Toye, Colm also had his best game of the campaign and won literally every ball that went his way and that even after Paddy Christie moved over to put the shackles on him. 8

**Ryan Bradley:** Also playing his second game in 24 hours, showed an improvement from the previous week and seemed happiest at wing half forward. 6

**Rory Kavanagh:** His quietest game of the four to date, somehow the ball did not go into his corner, yet he did manage to get on the ball and kicked the lead point in the closing minutes. 6

**Michael Boyle:** A top class display with two top drawer saves to cap the afternoon. 8

**Karl Lacey:** He came on for McDermott and slotted in at wing back and did reasonably well for a man playing second big game in 24 hours. 6

**Barry Dunnion:** Replaced Diver at half time and was given the job of marking Jason Sherlock who also came in at the break. He had his hands full with the Dublin dangerman. 5

**Eamon Reddin:** He came on for Raymond Sweeney and did reasonably well in a hard pressed defence. 5

**Brendan Devenney:** Showed for one or two balls when he came on in the middle of the second half and held up possession well to set Rory Kavanagh up for his late point. Still needs time to adjust to pace of game. 4

**Adrian Sweeney:** He replaced Brian Roper with under five minutes to play for his 100th game in the county jersey. Not on long enough to make an impact.

## National Football League Division 1A

**DONEGAL** .....0-13  
**OFFALY** .....1-11

Peter Campbell reports from  
Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon  
Photos by Thomas Gallagher



### The optimism of a great start on Sunday was tempered by the end as Offaly proved too strong for Donegal and condemned them to the drop to Division Two for next season.

The early signs were good as Donegal played their best passage of football in a long time to lead by six points to nil after nine minutes.

But that was as good as it got and even though it took Offaly some 45 minutes to get their noses in front, there were signs that all was not right in the Donegal defence from the throw-in when Paul Durcan denied Colm Quinn from point-blank range.

Durcan was one of the few Donegal player to emerge with his honour intact as he almost single-handedly kept Offaly at bay, saving at least four certain goals.

After the opening salvo, Donegal ran out of ammunition and were overwhelmed in many areas of the field, especially at midfield. The Donegal defence was held together by threads with only Eamon McGee and Karl Lacey performing up to scratch.

As Offaly ran riot, they made hard work of reflecting their superiority on the scoreboard, but once they got the goal ten minutes into the second half, they never looked like losing.

By that stage it was obvious that Donegal would need a goal to get the victory needed to keep their Division One hopes alive, but they rarely looked like troubling Padraig Kelly in the Offaly goal.

It was all so different in those opening ten minutes when all that glittered turned to gold for Donegal. Christy Toye was on fire; Neil Gallagher was spraying passes and Brian Roper was working like a beaver.

#### Points flowed

Points flowed from McFadden (free), Devenney (free), McFadden again, Roper, Toye with his left and Stephen McDermott.

Offaly were hardly being given time to breathe. They eventually got their first point in the 14th minute through Mark Daly, but a few minutes later Michael Hegarty manufactured a free for Devenney to restore the six point gap.

Then came the first turning point. Colm McFadden put Stephen McDermott through and he did everything right but saw his shot come

back off the crossbar. At the other end James Coughlan fielded a €45' but from four yards wasn't able to get the ball past Durcan. Back down the field Donegal came and a McFadden effort for a point came back of a post only for Rory Kavanagh to fist wide.

The Donegal defence was carved open again minutes later and this time Coughlan had two chances goal but found Durcan and Ray Sweeney stopping his efforts.

The second turning point for Donegal came on 30 minutes when Brian Roper was on a run forward and was fouled at least twice before eventually getting the free. But he reacted to the foul and he was shown yellow and the free taken away.

#### Narrowed gap

With Roper in the dugout Offaly found their shooting boots with James Coughlan converting a free; Ciaran McManus driving for goal only to see Durcan tip it over and Niall McNamee pointing in added time to narrow the gap to 0-7 to 0-4 at the interval.

The referee was under the spotlight in the half-time talk as not one player had been 'ticked' in the opening half although Roper had received yellow.

Offaly were back on the field early while Donegal were being wound up in the dressing room. However, Offaly began to exert an even greater dominance around the middle and by the 44th minute they had added points from Coughlan (free), Ciaran McManus (€45', Neville Coughlan and Niall McNamee to hit the front. Indeed, they were denied another goal when Paul Durcan went full length to tip an effort from McManus around the post.

The Offaly goal arrived a minute later with Niall McNamee and Karol Slattery creating the opening for James Coughlan, who had an easy task of finding the net.

Donegal hit back with their first point in 32 minutes, a Brendan Devenney free and a further point from Ryan Bradley left them two adrift with twenty minutes left. Neville Coughlan pointed for Offaly but points from frees from Devenney

and McFadden reduced the deficit to the minimum by the 58th minutes.

Offaly will feel that they should have had a penalty on 60 minutes when John Reynolds was through on a one-on-one with Durcan but the ball came back to Mark Daly to double their lead.

Donegal halved the lead with a long-range effort from Michael Hegarty with three minutes. It seemed a lost cause when referee Carney indicated only one minute of added time, but Adrian Sweeney, on as a sub., levelled matters from a free at the end of that minute.

The referee allowed Donegal a chance for the winner but going forward, Michael Hegarty was dispossessed and Offaly broke forward for Neville Coughlan to fire over the final score and make sure that Donegal's stay in Division One was over.

Donegal manager, Brian McEniff, made his way onto the pitch towards the end of the game to vent his anger at Roscommon referee, Peter Carney, and he had grounds for being unhappy.

#### Thirteen wides

However, when you consider the number of goal chances Offaly created and only took one and they also hit thirteen wides, it is easy to see why they finished up victors.

Apart from the excellent McManus at midfield, Niall McNamee had a great game at full-forward while Neville Coughlan and Mark Daly also stood out.

Donegal looked good when things were going well, but when they needed battling qualities, they fell well short of the mark.

**Donegal:** P Durcan; K Lacey, R Sweeney, E McGee; S Carr, B Monaghan, K Cassidy; S McDermott (0-1), N Gallagher; C Toye (0-1), M Hegarty (0-1), B Roper (0-1); R Kavanagh, B Devenney (0-4, 4f), C McFadden (0-3, 2f), Subs., R Bradley (0-1) for Roper; D Diver for Kavanagh; B Dunnington for Carr; A Sweeney (0-1, f) for McFadden.

**Offaly:** P Kelly; C Daly, C Evans, S Sullivan; N Grennan, S Brady, K Slattery; C McManus (0-2, one 45), A McNamee; N Coughlan (0-3), M Daly (0-2), J Reynolds; C Quinn, N McNamee (0-2), J Coughlan (1-2, 2f), Subs., R Malone for J Coughlan; J Kenny for Quinn.

**Referee:** P Carney (Roscommon).

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#### Division 1 A League Table

	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
Tyrone	6	5	0	1	5-86	3-66	26	10
Kerry	6	4	0	2	8-70	4-71	11	8
Mayo	6	4	0	2	5-82	7-73	3	8
Cork	6	2	2	2	5-70	4-62	11	6
Dublin	6	3	0		6-61	4-78	-11	6
Offaly	6	2	1	3	6-71	6-80	-8	5
Westmeath	6	1	1	4	5-59	8-74	-24	3
Donegal	6	1	0	5	3-68	7-64	-8	2

### Man of the match

Paul Durcan could not have done anything more in Donegal's cause, while Eamon McGee was also very good. The main candidates were in Offaly shirts with Ciaran McManus and Niall McNamee the leading duo. Because of the way he led the side from the back and from the front, McManus gets the award.

### Turning Point

As mentioned in the report, there were two. Firstly, Stephen McDermott's effort which came back of the crossbar and was cleared, while the loss of Brian Roper was a crushing blow as he was having one of his best games for the county.

### Ref watch

I have to say I would not be impressed by Peter Carney. There were a number of fouls on Christy Toye and one on Barry Monaghan which went unpunished in the first half. Brian Roper may have been foolish to react but if the foul had been whistled when it first happened then that reaction might not have happened.

# Donegal finish on bright note

**D**onegal rounded off a disappointing division 1A Allianz National football league campaign on a high, with a comprehensive victory over Cork at Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon.

While they were already doomed to Division Two before Sunday's game, after a luckless league run, at least Brian McEniff's charges finished on a bright note. And with this their last competitive outing before their June 12th showdown with either Fermanagh or Armagh, this win will have done confidence in the squad a world of good.

Second half goals from Adrian Sweeney, Colm McFadden and Brendan Devenney illuminated what was otherwise a poor encounter, that lacked any real competitive edge.

Cork may have been in with a chance of making the knock out stages - depending on results elsewhere - but if they were, they were masters of disguising it.

## Yellow card

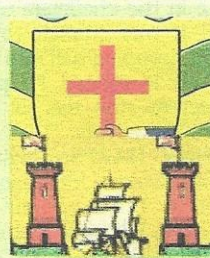
They may have shaded the first half, but once the home team hit the front with Sweeney's goal, the bottom seemed to fall out of the Rebel challenge. In fact they lost their way from the moment Anthony Lynch picked up the game's first yellow card four minutes before the goal.

Former All Star Sweeney, who made his first competitive out in the league having come on as a sub in a number of recent outings, struck on 47 minutes. And while the Dungloe man was credited with the goal and did palm the ball home from close range, Brendan Devenney was the architect. The Eunan's man who grew into the contest as the game progressed left his marker Diarmaid Duggan for dead out on the left wing, and with a half chance of taking the score himself he crossed to Sweeney who duly obliged.

## National Football League Division 1A

**DONEGAL** .....3-11  
**CORK** .....1-07

Tom Comack reports from Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon  
Photos by Michael O'Donnell



From 0-4 to 1-4 down at the break, Donegal, were all of sudden in front 1-6 to 1-4. Toye and Sweeney also knocked over early second half points.

And with Lynch missing from the heart of the Cork defence, it was more or less one way traffic with man of the match Brian Roper, posting three points on the trot to extend his team's lead out to five points 1-10 to 1-5. Sean Levis, kicked Cork's opening score of the second half on 53 minutes, with Conor McCarthy and Dermot Hurley hitting their other two scores late on.

The game was in the bag when Devenney and Paddy McNulty combined for Colm McFadden to slam home goal number two on 65 minutes, before Devenney added number three on the stroke of time.

## Skipped

James Masters goal eight minutes before the half-time break separated the teams at half-time. The right half forward skipped inside the defence to slot the ball past Shaun Boylan. Up to that point, there was little between the teams with Donegal coming from 0-3 to 0-1 at the end of the first quarter to tie up the game on 0-3 each thanks to points from Devenney, Sweeney and Michael Hegarty.

But they had stand-in goal keeper Shaun Boylan to thank. The young

Falcarragh man who was deputising for Paul Durcan, pulled off a fine save from Sean Levis in the 18th minute, just after Cork had gone two clear.

Donegal showed, three changes from the side narrowly defeated by Offaly the previous week, as well as Boylan, Eamon Reddin replaced Shane Carr in defence while Adrian Sweeney came in for Stephen McDermott with Christy Toye moving to midfield.

As well as Cork's Anthony Lynch, both Shaun Boylan and Eamon Reddin were shown yellow cards.

**Donegal:** Shaun Boylan; Eamon, McGee, Raymond Sweeney, Eamon Reddin; Karl Lacey; Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy, Neil Gallagher; Christy Toye (0-1), Rory Kavanagh, Michael Hegarty (0-1), Brian Roper (0-3); Colm McFadden (1-2), Brendan Devenney (1-2,1F) Adrian Sweeney (1-2); Subs: Shane Carr for E Reddin (yellow); Stephen McDermott for R Kavanagh; Sharkey for Boylan; Paddy McNulty for A Sweeney;

**Cork:** K Murphy; S O' Brien, D Duggan, C O' Connor; E Sexton, A Lynch, M O' Croinin; N Murphy, S Levis (0-1); J Masters (1-2), C McCarthy (0-1), A Cronin; P Clifford, B J Sullivan, C Crowley (0-2,1F); Subs: K McMahon for N Murphy; G Spillane for A Lynch (yellow); M Cronin for P Clifford, D Hurley (0-1) for K McMahon.

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

## Ref Watch

John Bannon had a few people on the terraces puzzled when he disallowed a Cork point eight minutes into the second half. But he was applying the rules as Cork did not wait in a break in play to introduce a sub for the yellow carded Anthony Lynch. He dished out three yellows in all, the two Donegal (Eamon Reddin and Shaun Boylan) on the advice of his umpires.

## The Marksman

**Shaun Boylan:** A solid display by the young Falcarragh man who pulled off one top drawer save in the opening quarter, and looked comfortable under a number of high balls into his area. He was a little wayward with a number of clearances. 7

**Eamon McGee:** He gave Colm Crowley a little early latitude but once he got to grips with the corner forward he had had the upper hand. 7

**Raymond Sweeney:** Like McGee had his hands full with Kevin Ger O'Sullivan who roved to the flanks, but held the fullforward scoreless and covered well across the back. 6

**Eamon Reddin:** He did reasonably well on Clifford and will be disappointed with his yellow card as it denied him further time to stake a claim for a place in the team. 5

**Karl Lacey:** While he picked up a lot of loose ball it was one of his quietest games in the campaign. 6

**Barry Monaghan:** He had a great duel with centre forward Conor McCarty, and while the Corkman had the better of the first half, Monaghan won the duel in the second. 6

**Kevin Cassidy:** Kevin found James Masters very elusive and lost him for the goal, but he came into the game when Donegal got the upperhand. 6

**Neil Gallagher:** Big Neil won a power of ball, but most of it was mopping up at the back than out around the middle. 6

**Christy Toye:** Christy had a very good opening fifteen minutes but drifted out of the game in the second quarter. The St. Michaels man had an excellent second half and scored a fine point to get the revival underway. 7

**Rory Kavanagh:** After a quiet game last week, back in form again on Sunday and seemed more suited to the half-forward line. 6

**Michael Hegarty:** Michael Hegarty is very much the playmaker and he filled that role again on Sunday using the ball very well. He started well and drifted into a deep role before playing more traditional number 11 in the second half. 7

**Brian Roper:** Without question a man of the match performance. Brian not only tracked back to help out in defence but also got forward to knock over three second half points to close the game out after Sweeney's goal. 8

**Colm McFadden:** He scored 1-2 with one of his points coming from a free, the goal was a strike from a man with a poachers instinct. 6

**Brendan Devenney:** In my book ran Roper close for man of the match, he scored 1-2 and played a big part in the other two. 7

**Adrian Sweeney:** Like McFadden and Devenney finished with 1-2 to his name, the goal a palmed effort and proved a good target man and was strong on the ball and really came good in the second half. 7

**Shane Carr:** He replaced Eamon Reddin in the middle of the second half at a time when the game had turned Donegal's way. Carr answered all questions posed. 5

**Stephen McDermott:** Stephen McDermott came on with about fifteen minutes remaining and got on the ball fairly frequent in that period. 5

**Ciaran Sharkey:** Ciaran replaced Shaun Boylan in the closing minutes and had little to do.

**Paddy McNulty:** Paddy was on the closing six minutes and in that time combined with Devenney for McFadden's goal.

## Man of match

Brian Roper worked his socks off from the first whistle to the last and polished of a fine display with three glorious second half points.