

2008

Team Manager: Brian McIver

Dr. Mc Kenna Cup.

1	2 nd Jan	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-12	UUJ	2-13
2	13 th Jan	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-12	Tyrone	0-11
3	16 th Jan	Páirc Esler	Donegal	0-13	Down	5-13

Dr. McKenna Cup winners:

Ulster Senior Football Championship

4	1 st June	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-12	Derry	1-14
	20 th July	Final:	Armagh	2-08	Fermanagh	1-11
	27 th July	Final replay	Armagh	1-11	Fermanagh	0-08

All Ireland Qualifiers 2008

5	19 th July	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	3-11	Roscommon	1-09
6	26 th July	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-15	Monaghan	0-16
	24 th Aug	Semi final	Kerry	1-13	Cork	3-07
	31 st Aug	Semi final replay	Kerry	3-14	Cork	2-13
	31 st Aug	Semi final	Tyrone	0-23	Wexford	1-14
	21 st Sept.	All Ireland Final	Tyrone	1-15	Kerry	0-14

National Football League. - 2008

7	2 nd Feb.	MacCumhaill Park
8	17 th Feb	Mc Hale Park
9	2 nd March	Newbridge
10	15 th March	McCumhaill Park
11	30 th March	Edendork
12	6 th April	Fr. Tierney Park
13	13 th April	O'Donnell Park

Allianz NFL Division 1

		Donegal	1-08	Kerry	1-07
		Mayo	0-16	Donegal	2-11
		Kildare	0-12	Donegal	0-11
		Donegal	1-12	Galway	1-11
		Tyrone	0-11	Donegal	0-09
		Donegal	1-14	Laois	2-08
		Donegal	0-10	Derry	0-15
	Final	Derry	2-13	Kerry	2-09

Final League table Division 1 2008

Team	P	W	D	L	For	Against	Diff	Pts
Derry	7	5	0	2	5-88	5-65	23	10
Kerry	7	5	0	2	2-81	1-72	12	10
Galway	7	5	0	2	8-79	7-76	6	10
Donegal	7	4	0	3	5-74	4-79	-2	8
Tyrone	7	3	1	3	2-77	2-80	-3	7
Mayo	7	2	1	4	5-92	10-77	0	5
Kildare	7	1	2	4	6-58	4-82	-18	4
Laois	7	0	2	5	5-78	5-96	-18	2

GAELIC LIFE DR MCKENNA CUP, GROUP B

Experimental Donegal

Donegal 1-12
 UUJ 2-13

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT MACCUMHAILL PARK

PHOTOS BY DONNA MCBRIDE

TWO second half goals from Tyrone's Colm Cavanagh saw University of Ulster, Jordanstown cause an upset by overcoming an experimental Donegal at wintery Sean MacCumhail Park on Thursday night last.

The Tyrone attacker, playing in midfield for the students on Thursday night, netted twice in a deadly four minute spell between the 53rd and 57th minutes to ensure that his side came out victorious, despite Ciaran Donnelly blasting a first half penalty wide of the mark.

For the 1,000 or so home followers, who braved the bitterly cold conditions to be in attendance, it was a disappointing night as they watched their unfamiliar side crash to a four-point defeat.

With a number of regulars unavailable through injury, suspension and vacation, Donegal boss Brian Melver handed first senior starts to four players with Damien McClafferty (St Eunan's), Paddy McDaid (Termon), Oran Doherty (Buncrana) and David Walsh (Naomh Brid) in from the start while Bundoran's Shane McGowan and Charlie Byrne of Malin made their debuts as second half substitutes.

Melver also gave starts to Kevin Rafferty, who has come back to the county panel after a prolonged absence while Stephen McHugh, a panelist in 2006, returned to the half-back line having recovered from injury.

While in largely experimental mode, Donegal were able to call on the services of the likes of Eamon McGee, Frank McGlynn, Neil Gallagher, Brian Roper, Kevin McMenamin and Colm McFadden, who added their experience to proceedings.

In difficult conditions, it was the University of Ulster side who held out for victory with Cavanagh's two goals giving them the platform for victory and they managed to hold out despite late efforts from Brian Roper (2) and Colm McFadden.

Leading by three at the interval (0-9 to 0-6), UUJ looked to be heading on their way to victory, but Oran Doherty opened the Donegal account just 30 seconds after the re-start and a fine point over his shoulder by Brian Roper pegged the deficit back to a point.

With his first touch, substitute Terry O'Flanagan opted to fist over UUJ first of part two and Mark Lynch re-opened the two-point cushion after a fine point from the boot of Brian Roper. The turning point of the game perhaps came in the 50th minute when Colm McFadden raced on to a defence splitting pass, but the St Michael's forward blazed wide with only goalkeeper Michael McAllister to beat.

Instead of being two points up, Donegal were soon trailing by five as Mark Lynch's point was followed by Cavanagh netting the first of his goals. A neat move involving Tomas McCann and Ciaran Donnelly concluded with the latter feeding Cavanagh, who made no mistake in punching home from close range.

And, just four minutes later, the Tyrone man had the simplistic task of knocking into the back of the net after McCann's lob left Donegal custodian Ciaran Sharkey for dead to open up an eight-point gap in favour of the visitors.

Managed by former Donegal manager Mickey Moran - who led Tir Chonaill to an All Ireland quarter final in 2002 - and Adrian McGuckin - currently involved in an advisory role with the current Donegal set up - the UUJ side held out in the closing minutes, although the home side gave their fans some hope ten minutes from time with Colm McFadden slotting home a penalty.

Points from Raymond Mulgrew and Mark Lynch (free) steadied the UUJ ship, while Donegal finished the stronger to bring some respectability back on the scoreboard. Brian Roper

er fired over his third and fourth points of the evening while McFadden elipped over to take his tally to 1-3.

Donegal had started off the brighter with McFadden the first to trouble the scoreboard operator just 45 seconds in with a free while a neat score from debutant David Walsh doubled the lead with the Naomh Brid man racing forward to calmly chip over with the left foot.

John Boyle and Colm McFadden traded points before UUJ began to stamp their authority on proceedings. Between the 8th and 18th minute, the students registered five points with Ciaran Donnelly (2), Andy Moran, Brendan McKenna and John Boyle on target as UUJ led 0-6 to 0-3.

Donegal were back on level terms with two points from captain for the evening Ryan Bradley preceding a fine score from wing back Stephen McHugh on 28 minutes. In truth, UUJ should have been well in front, however, and they could have been only for Ciaran Donnelly pulling a 23rd minute penalty wide of the target after Neil Gallagher fouled Tomas McCann.

Immediately after McHugh's leveller, corner back Niall McCready came to his side's rescue. The Aodh Ruadh defender stepped in with a

timely interception, taking the ball from the finger tips of Mayo's Andy Moran as he was about to fist home from the edge of the square.

Donnelly atoned for his penalty miss with two frees to put his side in the driving seat while an injury time score from Moran gave UUJ a 0-9 to 0-6 interval lead.

After the re-start, the snow began to fall and in the trying conditions it was UUJ who held out to collect two vital Group B points.

Donegal/UUJ

Goals	1/2
Points	12/13
Wides	7/7
45s	0/0
Frees awarded	20/24
Frees scored	2/4
Short efforts	5/2
Yellow cards	1/1
Red cards	0/0



Donegal Manager Brian Melver at MacCumhail Park feeling the bitter cold as Donegal are beaten by Jordanstown University in the McKenna Cup.

Donegal shade it against Tyrone

REPORT BY TOM COMACK
PHOTOS BY THOMAS GALLAGHER

DONEGAL..... 0-12
TYRONE 0-11

Donegal turned in an encouraging performance to get their Dr. McKenna Cup ambitions up and running with a narrow victory over reigning champions, Tyrone, in Fr. Tierney Park, on Sunday.

While Donegal may have regretted a number of missed chances even the most ardent O'Neill County supporter would have to admit that on their second half display Donegal were worthy of their victory.

It may be early in the season but this was a good morale boosting victory for an experimental Donegal. But Brian McIver and his opposite number, Mickey Harte, used the game to give some new faces a run out.

Of the two managers McIver may have been the more pleased. However, with the exception of Paddy McDaid at corner back, and to a lesser extent, David Walsh, in the half forward line in the second half, it was the displays of the tried and trusted that proved the difference between the sides.

Kevin Cassidy, who looked out of sorts and off the pace in the first half, came more into the game after the break and provided the platform in midfield, while Brian Roper as usual worked his socks off until he ran out of steam late on. In attack Colm McFadden may have enjoyed a liberal supply, but in fairness to the St. Michaels man he made the most of it, and ended the game as his side's top scorer. Ryan Bradley, too, showed that he may be the answer to McIver's prayers for a target man on the edge of the square. Bradley kicked one point in the first half on a limited supply, but really came into his own in the second half and as well as knocking over two brilliant points he also combined well with McFadden.

Christy Toye won oceans of possession in the first half at midfield even if he did not always make the best use of it, but he most definitely gave the team mobility in an area that they may have lacked in recent times.

Neil McGee slotted in well at full-back, but the real success story of the game was the display of Eamonn McGee at centre half back. Eamonn held the defence together in the first half when Tyrone threatened and again in the second half he covered across the line and made a number of timely interceptions. Termon's Paddy McDaid put up his hand in a big way with a top class display in the left corner of the defence, while Shane McGowan did enough to warrant another outing at least.

Donegal trailed by two points, 0-5 to 0-3, at the end of a first half in which both teams struggled to shake off the winter cobwebs. The sides were level twice in the opening quarter hour. Brian Roper opened the scoring on eight minutes and it was cancelled out two minutes later when Kevin McNally pointed from a close-in free. Ryan Bradley and Sean O'Neill swapped points on 12 and 14 minutes respectively before Cathal McCarron edged the O'Neill County into the lead from a 40 metre free on 23 minutes.

The game was held up for the best part of ten

minutes due to a neck injury picked up by Tyrone's Aidan McCarron, which resulted in McCarron being taken from the park by ambulance.

On the resumption Tyrone opened up a three point lead with points from McNally and Cathal McCarron. But it was a two point game when McFadden converted from 30 metres on the stroke of half-time after Roper was fouled.

Three wides in as many minutes at the start of the second half from Kevin Rafferty - now at midfield in a swap with Christy Toye - McFadden and David Walsh was not the best possible starts for the home team. And while Bradley reduced the margin to the minimum soon after, two rapid fire points from Tommy McGuigan saw Tyrone open up a three point advantage by the middle of the third quarter.

But Donegal were not to be deterred and with McFadden twice, one from play, and Bradley finding the target Donegal were on level terms approaching the half way mark in the half.

With the tie on a knife edge Sean O'Neill missed a glorious opportunity to find the Donegal net, but faced by Paul Durcan he drove wide with the goals gaping.

Gary Reilly temporarily restored Tyrone's lead, but sensing that the game was up for grabs Donegal points through McFadden (2) and one each from Roper and David Walsh, raced three points clear with just over twelve minutes of normal time remaining.

McFadden again raised a white flag to maintain the three point advantage after Enda McGinley had pointed for Tyrone.

The home team may not have scored again in the closing 13 minutes - nine of normal and four of injury time - but two more Cathal McCarron points was all Tyrone could muster.

Donegal: Paul Dupcan; Niall McCreedy, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Shane McGowan, Eamonn McGee, Stephen McHugh; Kevin Cassidy, Christy Toye; Kevin Rafferty, David Walsh (0-1), Brian Roper (0-2); Colm McFadden (0-6,4f), Ryan Bradley (0-3.1f), Johnny McLoone. Subs: Frank McGlynn for S. McHugh; Kevin 'Wappa' McMenamin for B. Roper; Joe Friel for K. Rafferty.

Tyrone: Jonathan Curran; P.J. Quinn, Dermot Carlin, Martin Swift; Fabian O'Neill, Colin Holmes, Philip Jordan, Enda McGinley (0-1), Conal Martin; Gary Reilly (0-1), Cathal McCarron (0-4,3f), Aidan McCarron; Kevin McNally (0-2,2f), Tommy McGuigan (0-2), Sean O'Neill (0-1). Subs: Kelvin Hughes for C. Martin; Colm McCullagh for A. McCarron inj.; Paul Rouse for G. Reilly; Michael McGee for F. O'Neill.

Referee: Martin Higgins (Fermanagh).

Gaelic Life Dr McKenna Cup, Group B

Donegal down and out after heavy defeat

Down 5-14
Donegal 0-13

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT PAIRC ESLER; PHOTOS BY TONY BAGNELL

DONEGAL crashed out of the Gaelic Life Dr McKenna Cup following this heavy defeat to Down at a chilly Pairc Esler in Newly on Wednesday night last where a five-goal haul from the Mourne men saw Donegal crash to their heaviest defeat of Brian Melver's reign as manager.

Three goals inside the opening half had the game effectively sealed by the end of the first half that had Down nine in the ascendancy (3-07 to 0-07) with an experimental Donegal looking well off colour.

Debutant John McAreavey twice found the back of Michael Boyle's net in the first 35 minutes and midfielder Jack Lynch was also on target as the home side romped to victory.

The Donegal supporters in the good 2,100 Wednesday evening attendance watched on as their defence was penetrated time and time again by a Down side that looked sharp and assured for mid-January.

The visitors, by contrast, were lacking a cutting edge although there were good displays from Kevin McMenamin, Ryan Bradley and substitute Colm McFadden, who between them accounted for all but one of Donegal's scores.

Playing the in an unfamiliar role in the half-forward line, Frank McGlynn was another Donegal man to turn in a decent display while Declan Walsh also showed up well in flashes.

Both sides concluded the game with 14 men. Down's Kevin McKernan was first to see red five minutes into the second half as he picked up a second yellow for a hit on Eamon McGee. Just a further seven minutes passed before McGee was joining the Down man in the dressing rooms after a foul on Jack Lynch earned him yellow card number two.

Already trailing by nine points at the break, Donegal were outscored handsomely in the second half with just six points placed on the board in response to Down's tally of 2-7 in the same period.

It was in the final ten minutes that Down inflicted the bulk of their damage. John McAreavey, Jack Lynch, Danny Hughes and Ronan Sexton had registered four home points while Ryan Bradley and Colm McFadden registered three apiece for Donegal to leave Down 3-11 to 0-13 in front by the 60th minute.

John Fegan, Dan Gordon and John McAreavey stretched the Down advantage before the fourth goal arrived five minutes from the end when substitute Packie Downey was on hand to finish off a move that involved Dan Gordon and Ronan Sexton.

Just over sixty seconds later, the icing was put

atop the cake with the Donegal defence parting yet again to allow John Fegan fed Danny Hughes and the wing-forward made no mistake to complete the rout.

As he had promised pre-match, manager Brian Melver continued in his experimentation with first starts handed out to Michael Maguire (Naomh Columba), Mark McGowan (St Eunan's) and Charlie Byrne.

In all, there were eight alterations to the team that had defeated Tyrone on Sunday with Michael Boyle, Joe Friel, Frank McGlynn, Oran Doherty and Kevin McMenamin coming into the side along with the debutants. Naomh Brid defender Dermot Langan was also given his debut with an appearance as a second half substitute.

Of the new faces, Maguire and Byrne were withdrawn from action in the first half during a period where the Donegal defence was being opened with an all too frequent regularity. Mark McGowan gave a more impressive display though and the Eunan's corner back may well have thrust himself into the manager's plans. He is likely to get a run out at a trial game before Melver selects his panel for the National League.

On Wednesday evening, the writing was on the wall from the opening stages. The hosts raced from the traps, taking an early three-point lead through Kevin McKernan, Danny Hughes and Cathal Magee before the Donegal account was opened by their top scorer Kevin McMenamin.

John McAreavey and Oran Doherty - with a well-taken score after a fine move involving Ryan Bradley, Frank McGlynn and McMenamin - traded scores as Down led by double scores at the end of the first quarter of an hour.

It was in the final 20 minutes of the first half that Ross Carr's men took control, outscoring Donegal 2-4 to 0-5 to give them a lead of nine points as the close of play in the first period.

Goal number one arrived in the 16th minute when Danny Hughes' pass found Jack Lynch and the midfielder evaded the attentions of Kevin Cassidy before powerfully blasting past Michael Boyle.

The goal came immediately after Donegal spurred a great goal chance at the other end. David Walsh connected with a Charlie Byrne pass and he fed Ryan Bradley with a soccer-style pass, but the Buncrana man saw his first-time effort beaten away by Bernard Connell.

Kevin McMenamin was on target twice to bring Donegal back to within a goal, but with points from Dan Gordon, Jack Lynch and Danny Hughes, as well as the second goal from Lynch - firing low past Boyle in the 24th minute - Down led 2-7 to 0-4 and indeed it could have been more but for the crossbar.

Danny Hughes plucked McAreavey's pass from the sky but he saw his effort come crashing off the crossbar, but the third did come from McAreavey towards the end of the half as he looped the ball in over Boyle when it seemed as if he had opted to shoot for a point.

Despite scores from McMenamin, twice, and a fine 40-metre free from McFadden, the three goals separated the sides at the changeover. Unfortunately for the Tir Chonaill supporters nestled in the impressive Pairc Esler stand, the comeback never materialised.

With All Ireland Champions Kerry to visit Sean MacCumhaill Park in a fortnight's time for the start of the NFL, one feels that it's back to the drawing board for Brian Melver and his back-room team.

Match Stats	Donegal/Down
Goals	0/5
Points	13/14
Wides	3/6
45s	0/0
Frees awarded	31/21
Frees scored	7/3
Short efforts	6/4
Yellow cards	3/4
Red cards	1/1

Teams

Down: Bernard Connell; Ciarán McGovern, Gary McArdle, Martin Cole; Colm Murney, Liam Doyl McGuigan; Dan Gordon (0-2), Jack Lynch (1-2, 1f); John Fegan (0-1), Kevin McKernan (0-1), Dáire (1-3); John McAreavey (2-3, 2f), Cathal Magee (0-1), Ronan Sexton (0-1). Subs: Ronan Murtagh (56mins); Packie Downey (for Magee, 57mins, 1-0); Peter Turley (for Lynch, 61mins); John Clarry (for Downey, 63mins); Darren O'Hanlon (for Cole, 65mins).

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Michael Maguire, Neil McGee, Mark McGowan; Charlie Byrne, Eamon Shane McGowan; Joe Friel, Kevin Cassidy; David Walsh, Frank McGlynn, Oran Doherty (0-1); Kevin McMenamin (0-5, 2f), Ryan Bradley (0-3, 3f), Johnny McLoone. Subs: Stephen McHugh (for Byrne, 3 mins); Kevin Rafferty (for Maguire, 33mins, 0-4, 2f); Kevin Rafferty (for Friel, h/t); Dermot Langan (for Doherty, 47mins); Denis Boyle (for McMenamin, 55mins).

Referee: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh).

sport

Ulster Senior Championship quarter-final

Donegal fall short once more

Donegal 1-12
Derry 1-14

Peter Campbell reports
Photos: Thomas Gallagher

Derry came good in the end at MacCumhail Park to secure their place in the Ulster semi-final when their superior fitness and stronger bench made the difference.

They almost blew their chances in the first half when they recorded eleven wides but in the second half they found the range, especially Paddy Bradley, who was by far the top performer on the field.

Donegal can have few excuses although supporters were far from happy with the performance of Sligo referee, Marty Duffy, who harshly punished a short free at a vital stage in the second half, while his linesman failed to notice Fergal Doherty's 'punch' on Rory Kavanagh, which should have yielded a red card in the final quarter.

There was a change in the starting line-ups of both teams with Barry Monaghan replacing the injured Paddy McDaid for Donegal while Francis McEldowney started for Sean Marty Lockhart for Derry. McDaid was named by the PA announcer even though it was known from early in the weekend that he would not be playing.

Donegal's failure to raise a flag of any colour from the 45th to the 70th minute was the main reason for their defeat. They had some chances but it seemed that the 'river end' goals were out of bounds on Sunday.

The home side only used two substitutes on a sweltering hot day and that decision along with an ability to make changes didn't help. Derry made switches at half time but Donegal continued to persist in defence with the same marking policy which has to be questioned.

Derry started well but had three wides in four minutes while at the other end David Walsh and Colm McFadden found the range for Donegal.

By the 13th minute Derry were ahead with two Paddy Bradley points and then they had a goal when Eoin Bradley availed of a slip by Eamon McGee to fire home from close range.

Donegal responded well with points from Kevin Cassidy and two from Colm McFadden. They went in front on thirty minutes when they were awarded a penalty when Christy Toye was upended. From the spot Michael Murphy blasted to the net and Colm McFadden added another fistid point.

Just before the break Conleth Gilligan and Rory Kavanagh traded points while Paddy Bradley had the final score from a free to leave the half-time score: Donegal 1-7, Derry 1-4.

Derry made changes in defence in the second half in their half-back line but were still three points in arrears after ten minutes.

Indeed, the opening period of the second half was very high intensity with Enda Muldoon hitting a wonderful point while Barry Monaghan and Michael Murphy replied for Donegal.

Then five Paddy Bradley points in succession put the Derry men in control as they turned the deficit into a winning lead.

Donegal's failure to get on the scoreboard for twenty five minutes ultimately was the difference while in that time Paddy Bradley grew in confidence and gave an outstanding individual display.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Frank McGlynn, Barry Monaghan (0-1), Barry Dunnion; Kevin Cassidy (0-1), Neil Gallagher; Christy Toye, Michael Hegarty, Rory Kavanagh (0-2); Michael Murphy (1-1,pen), Colm McFadden (0-6,3f), David Walsh (0-1). Subs., Brian Roper for Hegarty; Kevin Rafferty for Toye.

Derry: J Deighan; K McGuckin, K McCloy, F McEldowney; G O'Kane, N McCusker, M McIver; F Doherty, J Diver; M Lynch, P Murphy, E Muldoon (0-1); C Gilligan (0-2,2f), P Bradley (0-10,8f), E Bradley (1-1). Subs., P Cartin for McIver; J Conway for Murphy; P Devlin for Lynch.

Referee: M Duffy (Sligo).

Man of the match

There was little argument here. Paddy Bradley may have missed some chances in the first half but he was inspired in the second period, adding seven points, and he was really the difference between the sides.

Turning point

Donegal's ability to take - and sometimes to create - chances after ten minutes of the second half was their downfall and the Derry changes at half-time in the half-back line certainly was a factor.

Ref watch

Donegal fans were not very happy with Sligo referee, Marty Duffy, and it seemed that many decisions went against the home side. However, it would be untrue to say that he caused Donegal to lose. Derry were worthy winners on the day.



Plenty of room for improvement

Report by **Peter Campbell**

Photos by **Thomas Gallagher**

Donegal3-11
Roscommon1-9

Even though they won by eight points Donegal were far from impressive against a very poor Roscommon team in Ballybofey on Saturday evening.

On a difficult surface after a heavy pre-match shower, Donegal had the luxury of a great start, hitting 2-1 in 13 minutes but allowed the Connacht men back within two points at the break.

Controversially Roscommon were reduced to 14 before the break when their best player Cathal Cregg received a straight red after being reported by the linesmen and five minutes into the second half they lost Johnny Dunning, who was sidelined along with Neil McGee after the pair became embroiled in a scuffle.

The Roscommon supporters and management were far from happy with former goalkeeper, Shane Curran, making his way down from the press box to the sideline to express his disgust. Indeed there were so many people on the sideline at one stage, a serious incident could have occurred. Donegal were ahead by two goals inside eight minutes, both coming from high deliveries. Michael Murphy was on the end of the first while he set up new boy Stephen Griffin for the second.

Roscommon got back in the game on 17 minutes when Károl Mannion drove home a penalty after the visitors were awarded a very dubious award. Further points from Ger Heneghan saw Donegal ahead by just two at the break, 2-3 to 1-4.

The visitors had a great goal chance minutes into the second half when Dunning drove wide from close range. Two minutes later they were reduced to 13 and their challenge withered.

There were still only three points between them when Donegal got their third goal from the penalty spot. Stephen Griffin was the player fouled in the 49th minute and Michael Murphy found the corner to end the game as a contest.

In the closing quarter Donegal pulled away with some great points from Colm McFadden as the Roscommon challenge disintegrated.

The Connacht men could only manage five second half points, three of them from frees from Ger Heneghan but they never looked like getting the goal needed to bring them back into the contest.

Apart from the impressive Michael Murphy, Donegal had few good performances. Barry Monaghan had a good first half until forced out with injury. Kevin Cassidy had a good second half while Frank McGlynn also produced a consistent performance.

Donegal: P Durcan; E McGee, N McGee, K Lacey; F McGlynn, B Monaghan, K Cassidy; N Gallagher, R Kavanagh (0-1); K Rafferty (0-1), D Walsh (0-1), S Griffin (1-0); C McFadden (0-5m3f,45), R Bradley, M Murphy (2-2,pen,2f). Subs., S McGowan for Monaghan; B Devenney for Bradley; C Toye (0-1) for Walsh; C Dunne for Walsh; M McGowan for McGlynn.

Roscommon: G Claffey; P O'Connor, D Casey, S McDermott; D Keenan, G Cox (0-1), S Daly; M Finneran, K Mannion (1-1,pen); M O'Carroll, D O'Gara, J Rogers; C Gregg, S Kilbride (0-1), G Heneghan (0-5,5f). Subs., J Dunning for Kilbride; S O'Neill (0-1) for Finneran; A McDermott for Keenan; C Devaney for Rogers.

Referee: J Bannon (Longford).

Marksman

Paul Durcan: A good display from the Four Masters man who dealt with everything. Had little chance with the penalty. **7.5**

Eamon McGee: A good display from the Gaoth Dobhair man, especially in the first half. **7**

Neil McGee: Neil had a reasonably good first half but was troubled a little by Kilrane until he was replaced. Blotted his copybook by picking up a second yellow. **5**

Karl Lacey: The Four Masters man was below par in the first half with Cathal Cregg giving him lots of trouble. Was probably glad to see the Roscommon man being sent off. **5**

Frank McGlynn: A competent rather than spectacular performance, McGlynn had a good first half. **6**

Barry Monaghan: Until forced off with injury was one of Donegal's best players, winning plenty of breaking ball. **7**

Kevin Cassidy: Very quiet in the first half, Cassidy came more into the game in the second period to give some leadership. **6**

Neil Gallagher: A good start from the Glenswilly man but he was in and out of the game. **6**

Rory Kavanagh: Like his midfield partner, had some good moments but just wasn't consistent enough. **5**

Kevin Rafferty: Some good touches but overall the St. Eunan's man failed to leave his stamp on the game. Was obviously a target for kick-outs but many failed to reach him. **5**

David Walsh: Some very good moments in the game but needs

to be more involved to play the No. 11 shirt. **6**

Stephen Griffin: Took his goal well and was fouled for the penalty. Also had a couple of scoring chances which were off target. Will be happy enough with debut and should really have been left on the field to boost his confidence when game was won. **5**

Colm McFadden: Took some great scores but also took many wrong options. Needs to involve his teammates or Donegal will not be a threat. **6**

Ryan Bradley: Started inside but then withdrawn and was even back in his own goal area which didn't help his display. **5**

Michael Murphy: The real success for Donegal. The young Glenswilly man did his work with confidence and despite being fouled continuously in the second half, was Donegal's main threat. **8**

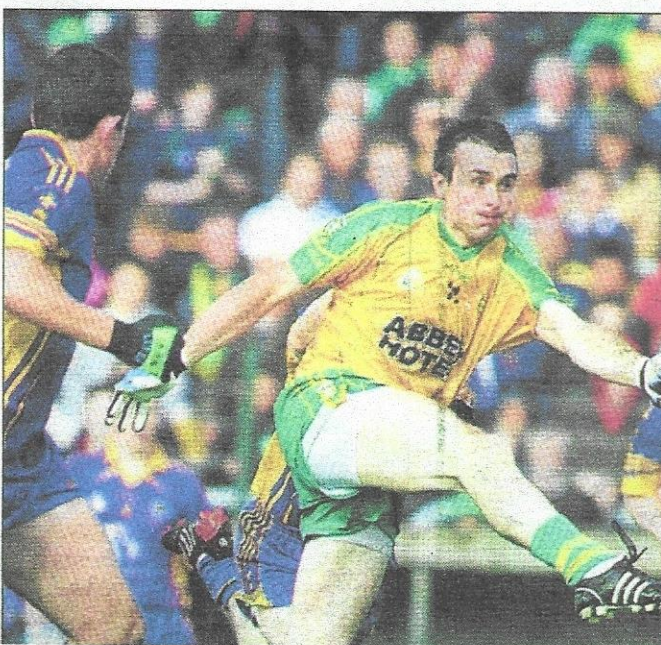
Shane McGowan: In for the injury Barry Monaghan just before the break, McGowan had little to do. **5**

Brendan Devenney: In at half-time, Devenney was posted at centre-forward and although lively, found it hard to get into the game. One would feel that if he has role to play, it is inside. **5**

Christy Toye: Got point with first touch but otherwise overise the game was in the bag at that stage. **5**

Mark McGowan: Great to see the young St. Eunan's player getting a run but he was only on for a short time.

Donegal's Rory Kavanagh under pressure against Roscommon in Ballybofey



SPORT

All-Ireland Qualifier, Round 2

End of summer for Donegal

Report by **Peter Campbell**Photos by **Brian McDaid**

Donegal0-15
Monaghan0-16

Donegal's summer came to an end in MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey on Saturday evening

For the second week in-a-row Monaghan had a point to spare after a titanic battle with Donegal in Ballybofey on Saturday evening.

The return of Paul Finlay was very important for the winners as he finished the game with a 100% shooting record, seven points from seven shots. He was ably assisted by Rory Woods in the scoring stakes while Dick Clerkin gave the winners a foothold around midfield.

In truth that was the big difference between the sides. Donegal had a poor conversion rate from their chances while Monaghan hit 16 points from 20 chances.

In front of over 10,000, Donegal led briefly at the start of both halves but for most of the game Monaghan were on the front foot and in the end Donegal came up just short.

The home side were up against it throughout the second half but they never threw in the towel and

close to the end Colm McFadden had the chance for a point to force extra time but his effort fell just short.

From the selected side on Friday last Donegal made three changes with Aodh Ruadh's Johnny Gallagher thrown in at the deep end for his first start while Brian Roper and Brendan Devenney came into the front line.

Of the three Roper was very impressive in his 145th game in the county colours. He was involved in most of Donegal's good work in the first half and could have capped the performance with a goal at the start of the second half only to see his effort stopped by the Monaghan 'keeper.

Both sides had good first half goal chances with Conor McManus hitting the post for Monaghan in the opening minute while Kevin Cassidy saw a rasper come back off the crossbar midway through the half.

Apart from that the first half was an even affair with the sides level at the break 0-8 each. Monaghan did lead by three at one stage but Donegal finished the half well with points from Colm McFadden (two frees) and Rory Kavanagh.

Roper's goal chance came within seconds of the restart and Michael Murphy did put Donegal ahead temporarily.

But then Monaghan took a firm

grip with four points on the trot. Christy Toye, introduced at the break for Kevin Rafferty, was one of the Donegal successes, hitting two second half points to bring Donegal back within a point.

But they were always chasing the game and it seemed as if Monaghan were able to get their scores with more ease. Of course, they had Paul Finlay, who proved to be the real difference in the end.

There were some very good Donegal performances, though, with Karl Lacey, Brian Roper, Kevin Cassidy, Neil Gallagher, Rory Kavanagh, David Walsh, Michael Murphy and Christy Toye all having their moments

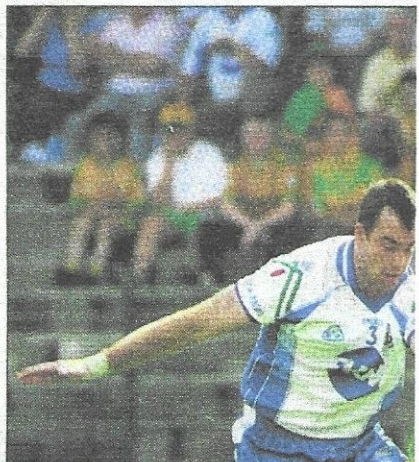
Donegal: P Durcan; J Gallagher, N McGee, K Lacey; E McGee, K Cassidy, F McGlynn; N Gallagher, R Kavanagh (0-2); K Rafferty, D Walsh (0-1), B Roper (0-2); C McFadden (0-3,3f), B Devenney, M Murphy (0-5,5f). Subs., C Toye (0-2) for Rafferty; M Hegarty for Devenney; S Griffin for Roper.

Monaghan; P McBennett; D Mone, J P Mone, D McArdle; D Freeman, V Corey, G McQuaid; E Lennon (0-1), P Finlay (0-7,6f); D Clerkin, S Golligly (0-1), C McManus (0-1); C Hanratty (0-1), R Woods (0-3), T Freeman (0-2). Subs., D Hughes for McQuaid; P McGuigan for Golligly; S Smyth for Woods.

Referee: R Hickey (Clare).



Kevin Cassidy just failed to get a touch MacCumhaill Park on Saturday evening.



SPORT

Allianz National Football League

Late, late show for Donegal

DONEGAL.....1-8
KERRY.....1-7

REPORT BY PETER **CAMPBELL**
 PHOTOS: BRIAN **McDAID**

Donegal can thank Tomas O Se for the two league points in MacCumhaill Park on Saturday night.

The All-Star who was drafted in as a late first half substitute for a flagging Kerry side, put them two points clear in added time near the end and seemingly on their way to victory.

When Colm McFadden stepped up to a free a minute later with time almost up, he had no option but to lob it towards goal and it ended up in the Kerry net.

Had O Se not pointed earlier then McFadden (and Donegal) would have been happy with a share of the spoils.

Donegal should not have been in that position as they had probably 70% of the possession over the 70+ minutes but didn't punish up front. They should have been at least six clear at the break but were only on level terms.

The All-Ireland champions fielded eleven of the starting line-up from their September win over Cork, while Donegal manager, Brian McIver, had many selection problems with just nine of the side that clinched their first ever League title for Donegal available to him through injury and suspension.

Conditions were difficult with three inspections of the pitch before the go-ahead was given but the playing surface held up well.

Donegal showed all the appetite in the first half and the should have been well clear at the break. As it was they were only on level terms - 0-3 each although they did play against a strengthening breeze. Kerry were limited to just three pointed frees from sharpshooter Bryan Sheehan.

The main talking points of the first half was two yellow cards picked up by Kerry full-back, Tom O'Sullivan, the second on 21 minutes when he hand tripped Kevin McMenamin to give Donegal a penalty. However, from the spot, Diarmuid Murphy was equal to Colm McFadden's spot kick.

Donegal had a number of other chances as well with Brian Roper and Kevin McMenamin guilty of some bad misses.

Half-time: Donegal 0-3, Kerry 0-3.

Kerry started the second half in whirlwind fashion with two points inside three minutes from another Sheehan free - a spectacular effort from near the sideline - and one from Declan O'Sullivan.

Ryan Bradley hit back for Donegal but then disaster struck when a Declan O'Sullivan effort for a point dropped on the crossbar and Kieran Donaghy was in to fist to the net.

The old failing of inaccuracy looked to have cost Donegal but they hit back with three points through Ryan Bradley, spare man Karl Lacey and a Colm McFadden 45m free.

When Kevin Cassidy made the opening for Kevin McMenamin to level matters with seven minutes left it looked as if honours were going to be shared, especially as Bryan Sheehan was off target from two frees.

The Kerry man found the target at the third attempt and when Tomas O Se put two between them with two minutes of the three allotted extra minutes played, it looks curtains for the home side.

But then Donegal got out of jail when Colm McFadden's free was deflected to the Kerry net by a combination of Eoin Brosnan and Kieran Donaghy.

For Donegal Kevin Cassidy played a captain's part while young Paddy McDaid had a stormer in his first game. The McGees, Karl Lacey, Brian Roper and Kevin McMenamin also played their part.

For Kerry Marc O Se and Killian Young were excellent in defence; Diarmuid Murphy was solid but up front only Bryan Sheehan from placed balls was the only real threat in a very rusty Kerry performance.

Donegal: P Durcan; K Lacey (0-1), N McGee, P McDaid (0-1); K Cassidy, E McGee, F McGlynn; N Gallagher, C Bonner; C Toye, D Walsh, B Roper; C McFadden (1-2,2f), R Bradley (0-3,1f), K McMenamin (0-1). Subs: K Rafferty for C Bonner; G McFadden for Toye

Kerry: D Murphy; M O Se, T O Sullivan, P Reidy; T Griffin, A O'Mahony, K Young; M Quirke, S Scanlon; E Brosnan, D O'Sullivan (0-1), D Moran; S O'Sullivan, K Donaghy (1-0), B Sheehan (0-5,5f). Subs., T O Se for S O'Sullivan; K O'Leary for Moran

Referee: M Duffy (Sligo)



The Donegal Team that played Kerry on Saturday night

SPORT

Allianz National Football League Division 1

McGee Donegal's saviour in another late show

MAYO0-16
DONEGAL2-11

REPORT BY TOM COMACK
 PHOTOS BY THOMAS GALLAGHER

For the second game in a row Donegal sent the headline writers scurrying back to their screens as the National League champions again re-wrote the script with another late goal.

Fifteen days earlier an injury time deflection from Kerry's Eoin Brosnan saw Donegal snatch victory from the jaws of defeat and two precious league points. This time around in sun-basked McHale Park, it was no deflection but possibly a contender for goal of the year from Eamonn McGee that earned the boys from the North West another precious league brace.

The copy writers were already busy praising the virtues of an at times virtuoso Mayo performance when the Gaoth Dobhair man hit the delete button four minutes into time added on.

Centre back McGee, who had been operating at corner back for much of the second period, raced forward to take a pass from Frank McGlynn to hit the staunchon in the right corner of Shane Nallen's net from 25 metres.

From trailing for most of the game and in truth having played second fiddle to Mayo for most of a high quality encounter, all of a sudden Donegal had their noses in front and Mayo were stunned and holding the losing docket. From the kick-out the final whistle sounded and a victory for the second time in a row Donegal scarcely deserved.

But February and March are not about high octane and flamboyant football - ask Mayo - no February and March are about accumulating points. In this department Donegal 2008 cannot be faulted. Like Meath of old, new look Donegal do not know when they are beaten and unlike in last year's championship they never give up and play right to the final whistle.

Maximum points from two outings in which they struggled for long periods is testimony to this new found never say die attitude. Make no mistake Mayo played all the pretty football and this was especially so in the opening 26 minutes when they posted 11 of their points, all but one coming from play. Conor Mortimer, Andy Moran, James Gill, Alan Dillon, Keith Higgins and Austin O'Malley were all on target. Indeed but for the one man show up front of Colm McFadden, who posted five points and was the visitor's only scorer in this period, Mayo could have been out the gate.

But leading 0-11 to 0-7, after McFadden had a penalty saved by Shane Nallen when Kevin 'Wappa' McMenamin - for the second game in succession was fouled in the large rectangle - Mayo looked as good as home and hosed at the break. In truth Donegal were not good in the first half, and in fact looked very ordinary. And in all honesty they did not improve a whole lot for much of the third quarter though a Ryan Bradley palmed goal five minutes into the new half did bring them to within two of the Connacht men.

But with Dillon and Mortimer raising white flags the margin was out to four again by the 45 minute mark, with Mortimer's strike all in

one movement a sublime effort and up until McGee struck with his late winner, the score of the match.

With Mayo leading by four and looking reasonably comfortable, though wondering why they did not have a little more breathing space, Donegal hung in. And without being brilliant they battled on and were still within touching distance thanks to points from David Walsh and Kevin Rafferty, to set up a two point game with the fourth and final quarter still to play.

Twice in the closing 18 minutes Mayo eased back out to a three point gap only on each occasion for Donegal to reduce the margin to two with McFadden twice doing the business. The last of these came two minutes into injury time to pave the way for that one final assault and McGee's golden moment - echoes of another famous Castlebar mid simmer victory over John O'Mahony's Galway in an All Ireland championship quarter final replay back of 2003.

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Kevin Cassidy, Eamonn McGee (1-0), Frank McGlynn; Neil Gallagher, Kevin Rafferty (0-1); Christy Toye, David Walsh (0-1), Brian Roper; Colm McFadden (0-7,3F), Ryan Bradley (1-2F), Kevin 'Wappa' McMenamin. Subs: Martin McElhinney for K. McMenamin; Barry Monaghan for P. McDaid; Kenneth Doherty for B. Monaghan inj.; Leo McLoone for C. Toye.

Mayo: Shane Nallen; Tom Cunniffe, Billy Joe Padden, Liam Malley; Chris Barrett, Trevor Howley, Keith Higgins (0-2); Seamus O'Shea, Peadar Gardiner; James Gill (0-2), Alan Dillon (0-3,1F), Michael Mullins; Conor Mortimer (0-6,3F), Austin O'Malley(0-1), Andy Moran (0-1). Subs: David Heaney for T. Cunniffe; Tom Parsons for S. O'Shea; Aidan Kilcoyne for A. O'Malley; Trevor Mortimer for M. Mullins.

Referee: Michael Duffy (Sligo)



sport

Allianz National Football League, Division 1

No last minute salvation in Newbridge

Report by **Peter Campbell**
Photos by **Thomas Gallagher**

KILDARE0-12
DONEGAL 0-11

Donegal failed to make it third time lucky in St. Conleth's Park, Newbridge, when Kildare hit the winning point in the second minute of added time.

For most of the game Donegal held a narrow lead and they had chances to extend that advantage late in the game. They were punished for the misses when half-time substitute, Michael Conway, hit the winner. Overall it was probably Donegal's best performance to date in the league and they probably should have secured a draw.

The main talking point from the first half was the amount of frees with Cavan referee, Joe McQuillan, the centre of attraction. Apart from the 31 frees (20 to Donegal and 11 to Kildare) he also flashed seven yellow cards.

At the end Donegal manager, Brian McIver was very unhappy with the official, saying "diplomacy didn't permit him to comment on his display."

The frustrating thing about McQuillan was that he refereed the two halves in a completely different manner. In the first half he was fussy and angered both sets of supporters while in the second half he allowed plenty of leeway. That along with a very partisan local support made it a hostile atmosphere.

The yellow cards picked up by Donegal proved crucial as Eamon McGee was substituted at the break because he had also been ticked. He had been one of Donegal's best performers in the opening half. Added to that Donegal also lost All-Star, Karl Lacey, at the break with a hamstring strain.

Despite that Donegal had plenty of chances to wrap up the two points albeit they played second fiddle around midfield in the second period with Dermot Earley dominating. In the final ten minutes Donegal recorded five wides, most of them good chances, and even if they might feel aggrieved by the referee, they must first look within for the main reason they lost the game.

Again they relied almost totally on Colm McFadden for their scores. The St. Michael's man hit eight and could have had twelve on another day.

A point from Kevin Rafferty in the second half was the only score outside the full-forward line as the half-forward line - for the third game in-a-row - failed to raise a flag. How is it there isn't one forward from a Division 1 club in the starting line-up?

Donegal started very brightly with three points inside six minutes, all from frees. Ryan Bradley had the first after a minute and then Colm McFadden added two more.

Kildare were very rusty in the opening quarter but they got on the scoreboard on twelve minutes when Johnny Doyle put

centre-half back Andrew McLoughlin to show his front men the way.

Doyle then became a real thorn in the Donegal defence adding four pointed frees as Kildare edged in front by the 26th minute. The half-forward also had a good goal chance on eighteen minutes, driving wide from 20m with just the keeper to beat.

By that stage some tempers were also becoming frayed with two of the Kildare points courtesy of dissent by Donegal players as they got dragged into the game plan of Kieran McGeeney.

Donegal came back into the game in the final ten minutes and they went back in front thanks to the accuracy of corner forward, Colm McFadden, who pointed from play and a free while Ryan Bradley also added a point to put Donegal 0-6 to 0-5 ahead.

In the final minutes of the half Dermot Earley levelled once more for Kildare while Colm McFadden restored Donegal lead at the break, pointing a free from 40m

Half-time: Donegal 0-7, Kildare 0-6.

Colm McFadden opened the gap to two early in the second half and then both sides missed open goal chances. Pdraig Mullarkey drove wide from five yards on 37 minutes and within a minute Ryan Bradley sidefooted wide of an open goal at the other end after the ball broke kindly to him.

Points from Pdraig O'Neill and James Kavanagh had Kildare level again by the 51st minute before Kevin Rafferty and a superb effort from Colm McFadden put Donegal two clear once more.

By the 64th minute Kildare's refusal to throw in the towel was rewarded with points from Michael Conway and John Doyle. They had a goal chance as Doyle was allowed in along the endline before Paul Durcan denied him.

Colm McFadden found the range again with a free from outside the 45m line on the 69th minute and it looked as Donegal were going to prevail. But Kildare were level within a minute and a minute into the two minutes of added time Dermot Earley drove through the middle to create the space for Ken Donnelly to win a free and Conway hit the winner.

Kildare: Thomas Corley; Emmet Bolton, Kevin O'Neill, Morgan O'Flaherty; Anthony Rainbow, Andrew McLoughlin (0-1), Gary White; Killian Brennan, Dermot Earley (0-1); John Doyle (0-5,5f), Pdraig O'Neill (0-1), Alan Smith; James Kavanagh (0-1), Pdraig Mullarkey, Ken Donnelly. Subs., Michael Conway (0-3,2f) for Smith; Tadhg Fennin for Kavanagh; Eamonn Callaghan for Bolton.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Niall McCreedy; Kevin Cassidy, Eamon McGee, Frank McGlynn; Neil Gallagher, Kevin Rafferty (0-1); Christy Toye, Brian Roper, Martin McElhinney; Colm McFadden (0-8,6f), Ryan Bradley (0-2,1f), David Walsh. Subs., Barry Monaghan for E McGee; Declan Walsh for Lacey; Kevin McMenamin for McElhinney; Stephen McDermott for Bradley; Leo McLoone for Toye.

Referee: J McQuillan (Cavan).

sport

Report by Alan Foley

Photos by Brian McDaid

Allianz National Football League Division One

Donegal's tribal dance ensures another win

Donegal 1-12
Galway 1-11

Donegal manager Brian McIver was praiseworthy of his team as they recovered from a stuttering start against Galway to grab the two points that moved them to joint-top of the Allianz National Football League Division One.

Each of the Donegal's games thus far in this season's campaign have been settled by wafer-thin margins and Saturday night's contest against the divisional frontrunners was similarly nip and tuck. The complexion of game altered as momentum ebbed and flowed from side to side.

"It was a very good, gutsy performance and we played some great football," began McIver. "After having made a disastrous start, we came back really strong and it was a very good performance. It doesn't make up for what happened down in Kildare but it was still a very good two points," he added.

"Half-time probably came at the wrong time for us as we were going really, really well. That score at the start of the second half set us off well again but then the sending off, as it happens in many games, we stopped working all over the field and it suited them down to a tee."

A poor start was overturned impressively but at a stage when Galway looked decidedly weak at the knees, Donegal could not find the killer blow to floor those in the maroon. As a consequence there was no stream for the exits prior to the final whistle. Cormac Bane's attempted free to level things was caught on the goalline by Neil Gallagher in the last act.

McIver shuffled his pack from the side that lost out by a single point in Kildare 13 days' beforehand. Rory Kavanagh returned from his 12-week suspension after being sent off for his club St Eunan's in the All-County League final. The Letterkenny man started at centre field and another man making his first appearance of 2008 was Michael Hegarty.

The fare on show in Ballybofey provided commendable entertainment an element of unfamiliar openness a part of the country usually more accustomed to claustrophobic and static encounters. Liam Sammon's team have been involved in expansive games all spring and this trend continued as Donegal accepted the invitation.

Brian Roper cut a few daisies to score the opening goal of the game on 55 minutes. The dominative wing forward waited patiently for Ryan Bradley to palm down Karl Lacey's raking ball and his drive was right into a corner across the brows of Adrian Faherty.

That gave Donegal a five-point cushion at 1-11 to 0-9 but the old adage about being susceptible just after scoring proved apt. Declan Meehan's long ball was allowed to bounce by the Donegal defence and Paul Durcan's indecision in coming out enabled Michael Meehan a simple punch into the corner to keep things interesting.

Whereas Donegal were typically reliant on Colm McFadden and Bradley's scores in the forward line, Galway's threats were multi-pronged initially. After five minutes they had established a four-point lead through scores from Mathew Clancey, Michael Meehan, Darren Mullahy and a Padraic Joyce free.

With Joyce the string-puller at centre forward, there was a verve and variance to the westerners' attacks and within moments, Lacey was re-rooted from his corner-back berth to obtain the tricky marking task. Joyce's job description broadened as a result as he was forced to defend as much as he had previously attacked.

McFadden opened the Donegal account to raise some cheer for those chilled on the terraces and Roper added to that before Michael Meehan made it five points to two.

Thirteen minutes and five Galway scores passed before the umpires had to spread their hands to indicate a wide at the town end.

Donegal, to their credit, were even more efficient in front of the posts and had six points on the board from as many attempts. Two Bradley points and another pair from McFadden put them back in contention at six points apiece with Michael Meehan's point in between as accurate as an architect could have drawn.

Bradley's third free edged the home team ahead for the first time on the half hour mark and McFadden added an eight point before David Walsh made it 0-9 to 0-6 at the interval.

There had been a cloud of confusion over whether or not the game would take place but match referee Aidan McAlynn deemed the surface playable and the switch to Ballyshannon on Sunday lunchtime was not required.

McIver would have been satisfied with the opening half. Only one wide, from Bradley when he failed to chalk his cue, and driving performances from Roper and the furrowing Kevin Cassidy in particular dusted over an uncertain opening.

The game appeared to be up for Galway when Damien Burke was sent off for a second booking. The Corofin man struck out at Bradley after a clumsy tackle on McFadden in the first half. The house appeared to be bursting at the seams but Galway fought on and composed themselves to mount a late challenge that almost changed the destination of the points.

Walsh and Kavanagh rubber-stamped the hosts' dominance but a number of Joyce frees kept Galway in touch at a stage when Donegal couldn't shake off the persistent guests. When Mullahy added a second point from his number seven berth, there was just one between them. That though was as close as Galway would get. For the fourth game in succession, Donegal were close too.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Niall McCready; Frank McGlynn, Eamon McGee, Kevin Cassidy; Neil Gallagher, Rory Kavanagh (0-1); Kevin Rafferty, Michael Hegarty, Brian Roper (1-1); Colm McFadden (0-4, 2 frees), Ryan Bradley (0-4, 3 frees), David Walsh (0-2).

Substitutes: Barry Monaghan for N McCready (42 mins); Christy Toye and Ciaran Bonner for K Rafferty and M Hegarty (53 mins); Stephen McDermott for B Roper (61 mins)

Galway: Adrian Faherty; Kieran Fitzgerald, Finian Hanley, Damien Burke; Garry Sice, Niall Coyne, Darren Mullahy (0-2); Paul Geraghty, Niall Coleman; Eddie Hoare, Padraic Joyce (0-3, 3 frees), Declan Meehan; Mathew Clancy (0-2), Michael Meehan (1-3),

Referee Watch

Aidan McAlynn done well in the middle and couldn't be faulted for sending Damien Burke to the line. He was though a little fussy with some of his decisions and there were a few soft frees.

Substitutes: Marc Lydon for P Geraghty (21 mins); Barry Cullinane and Garreth Bradshaw for E Hoare and G Sice (36 mins); Cormac Bane (0-1) for N Coyne (66 mins); Paul Conroy for M Lydon (69 mins)

Referee: Aidan McAlynn (Derry).

Man of the match

Brian Roper continued his impressive form of the spring to bag Donegal's goal. The Aoch Ruadh man worked hard throughout and was the best on show.

Turning Point

Brian McIver took no time to realise the prowess of Padraic Joyce and moved Donegal's best defender Karl Lacey onto. This marked the start of the improvement from Donegal.

sport

Allianz National Football League

Dismal Donegal fail to take chance

Report by **Peter Campbell**Photos by **Thomas Gallagher**

Tyrone0-11
Donegal0-9

Donegal's hopes of retaining their league title disappeared on Sunday in Edendork when they went down to Tyrone in a very poor game.

Rarely have we seen such a poor Tyrone team in recent times but Donegal were unable to take advantage despite plenty of chances.

The game was changed from Healy Park on Saturday night and while the pitch at Edendork was in reasonably good condition, the venue was hardly county standard with the throw-in delayed by fifteen minutes to allow supporters reach the ground.

The long delays afterwards certainly didn't help as Donegal supporters were help up on the homeward journey with little during the game to cheer them.

There wasn't much for them to shout about during the game either as Donegal gave away some silly frees and also gave away points for talking back to the referee.

We can be thankful that we already have six points on the table and that should be enough to ensure that Donegal are in Division 1 next year. Laois are almost already relegated and Kildare would have to get at least a draw next weekend away to Kerry to put Donegal in danger.

The old story of poor attacking play was at the root of Donegal's problems. David Walsh had a good workmanlike first half while Kevin Rafferty and Michael Hegarty had some good moments, but overall the front line lacked punch or any kind of cohesiveness.

It was the end of a very poor week for Donegal football following on heavy defeats for the U-21s and minors by Derry and Tyrone respectively.

Sunday's game was close all through with the sides level on five occasions in the first half. Tommy McGuigan had the first score, from a sideline while points from Rory Kavanagh and Kevin Rafferty had Donegal in front by the sixth minute. These were two of only four Donegal scores from play.

Raymond Mulgrew was allowed to field behind the Donegal defence and level and Ryan McMenamin was on the end of a Tyrone break to put them ahead again on 13 minutes when Rory Kavanagh had an effort blocked.

Two pointed from frees from Ryan Bradley had Donegal back in front by the 22nd minute and in between Colm McFadden was wide with Donegal's best attack. Karl Lacey had started the move and was on hand to take the pass from McFadden on the run but was ignored.

Niall Gormley levelled once more for Tyrone and the Donegal goal had a charmed life on 26 minutes when Paul Durcan saved and Neil McGee was on hand on the line to make a second stop from Collie Holmes.

Colm McFadden edged Donegal ahead once more but in the final five minutes points from Tommy McGuigan and Enda McGinley left Tyrone 0-6 to 0-5 ahead at the break. Three minutes from the break Donegal did have a great goal chance with Brian Roper sent clear. When he was closed down he found David Walsh but Pascal McConnell made a great stop from the Naomh Brid man.

It looked good for Donegal as they went ahead again with two frees from Bradley and McFadden early in the second half but by the 51st minute points from three Gormley frees reflected the topsy-turvy nature of the match.

In the final 20 minutes the sides shared four points, Christy Toye and Michael Hegarty drawing Donegal level with nine minutes left while Gormley (free) and Enda McGinley sealed the two points for Tyrone.

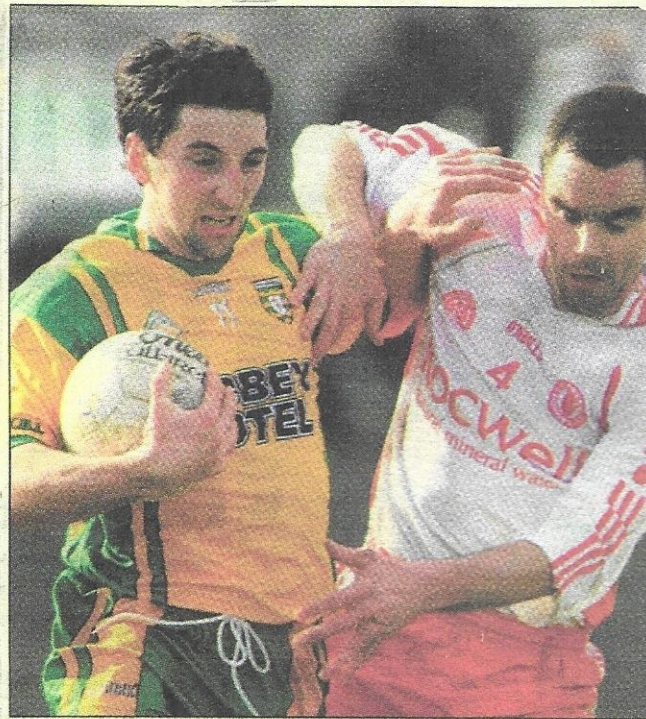
In the middle of the Donegal scores Tyrone had the best goal chance of the game when lazy Donegal defence saw the ball turned over and Sean O'Neill was put clear but he blazed wide and was immediately replaced by Brian McGuigan.

But Donegal did have their chances with Rory Kavanagh twice losing possession when in a good position while Colm McFadden also spurned two good chances.

Tyrone: Pascal McConnell; P J Quinn, Justin McMahon, Ryan McMenamin (0-1); Davy Harte, Conor Gormley, Philip Jordan; Colin Holmes, Enda McGinley (0-2); Ryan Mellon, Raymond Mulgrew (0-1), Sean Cavanagh; Tommy McGuigan (0-3, s/l,2f), Sean O'Neill, Niall Gormley (0-4,4f). Subs., Martin Swift for Quinn; Brian McGuigan for O'Neill; Peter Donnelly for Mulgrew.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Frank McGlynn, Eamon McGee, Kevin Cassidy; Neil Gallagher, Rory Kavanagh (0-1); Kevin Rafferty (0-1), Michael Hegarty (0-1), Brian Roper; Colm McFadden (0-2,2f), Ryan Bradley (0-3,3f), David Walsh. Subs., Ciaran Bonner for Gallagher; Christy Toye (0-1) for Bradley; Conall Dunne for Roper

Referee: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh)



Michael Hegarty Donegal holds off the challenge of Tyrone's Ryan McMenamin during the NFL at Edendork on Sunday. 0104TG38

Man of the match

Not the easiest task. This just wasn't a game that many players stood out. Niall Gormley missed his first two frees but missed nothing afterwards. Enda McGinley had an influential game at midfield, hitting two points. For Donegal Frank McGlynn was excellent in the first half while Karl Lacey and Paddy McDaid also played their part. We'll divide the spoils, giving it to Frank McGlynn and Enda McGinley.

Turning point

There weren't any major turning points in a game that most will want to forget quickly. Donegal did have their chances to draw level in the final minutes when just one in arrears and their lack of composure would be a worry ahead of the championship.

Ref watch

Armagh official, Pdraig Hughes, seemed to be a little severe on some Donegal players. He certainly penalised any Donegal dissent but I can't recall him being consistent by doing the same with Tyrone.

sport

Allianz National Football League, Division 1

Donegal flattered as league hopes remain intact

Peter Campbell reports

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Photos: Brian McDaid

Donegal1-14
Laois2-8

Another two league points against Laois leaves Donegal still in contention to retain their Allianz National League title but Lady Luck was on their side in Ballyshannon on Sunday.

With huge justification, Laois manager, Liam Kearns, sought out referee, Eugene Murtagh, when the final whistle sounded and he was obviously angry that his side did not get at least one penalty during the game.

Full-forward, Colm Kelly - the outstanding performer on view from both sides - was twice fouled inside the area and the Longford official failed to give him anything.

Donegal took full advantage of the generosity on display with Colm McFadden again the main score getter and the St. Michael's man was also much improved in general playing, setting up quite a few scores as well.

Laois will wonder how they failed to raise a flag from the 43rd minute until the end despite having plenty of possession. Their scoring was confined to two shorts bursts - 1-2 midway through the first half and 1-2 early in the second period.

Donegal's scoring was much more convincing, going 0-5 to 0-2 ahead in the first quarter with points from McFadden and Michael Hegarty frees, others from play from Ciaran Bonner, Kevin Rafferty and Karl Lacey in between. The Laois points came from a Michael Tierney '45' and a point from play by Donie Brennan. Tierney's '45'

came after the first of many Laois goal chances, Michael Boyle thwarting Ross Munnelly and Colm Kelly.

Laois were in front by the 18th minute from their first scoring burst. Padraig McMahon broke forward from half-back to fire home past Boyle while points from Brennan and a Colm Kelly fisted point put the Leinster men ahead by two points.

Donegal responded well with points from Ciaran Bonner, a McFadden free and one from Leon Thompson before they got their own goal on 27 minutes. A high ball from Michael Hegarty was followed in by David Walsh who got the touch between 'keeper and full-back to flick to the net.

Before the break points from Ross Munnelly and a Tierney free left the half-time score - Donegal 1-8, Laois 1-6. However, just before the break, McMahon went forward again to set up Ross Munnelly who was unable to beat Boyle from close range.

The home side increased the lead with a Colm McFadden within a minute of the re-start before Laois had their second scoring burst. A Laois effort for a point came back off the crossbar and Paul

Lawlor was on hand to fist to the net and points from Ross Munnelly and half-back David Murphy had them two clear once more.

But amazingly that was to be their last score. Rory Kavanagh had a chance of a Donegal goal but was well blocked by Peter O'Leary but Donegal were back on level terms by the 51st minute through Michael Hegarty and Colm McFadden frees.

McFadden pointed Donegal in front on 55 minutes and he opened the gap further four minutes later. Laois had their chances in the final 10 minutes with Colm Kelly seemingly fouled inside the 'square' and Donie Brennan had two great chances but hit the side netting with his first while Michael Boyle advanced to block his second in added time. Just before the end of normal time, McFadden had the final score, a pointed free for Donegal.

It was far from a convincing display from Donegal. Karl Lacey was the only defender to look in control although Paddy McDaid had a reasonably good outing.

The entire midfield and half-forward area suffered until the introduction of Brian Roper, who began to

Ref watch

Not a great display by Eugene Murtagh. In a game that was reasonably easy to control, he was going well until the last quarter but seemed to lose his way and was told so by the Laois management when the final whistle went.

win some breaking ball, while Colm McFadden was probably Donegal's best player, scoring well and also linking well with his teammates.

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Karl Lacey (0-1), Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Frank McGlynn, Eamon McGee, Kevin Cassidy; Kevin Rafferty (0-1), Rory Kavanagh; Christy Toye, Michael Hegarty (0-2,2f), Ciaran Bonner (0-2); Leon Thompson (0-1), Colm McFadden (0-7,6f), David Walsh (1-0). Subs: Brian Roper for Bonner; Conall Dunne for Toye; Stephen McDermott for Rafferty; Ryan Bradley for Thompson.

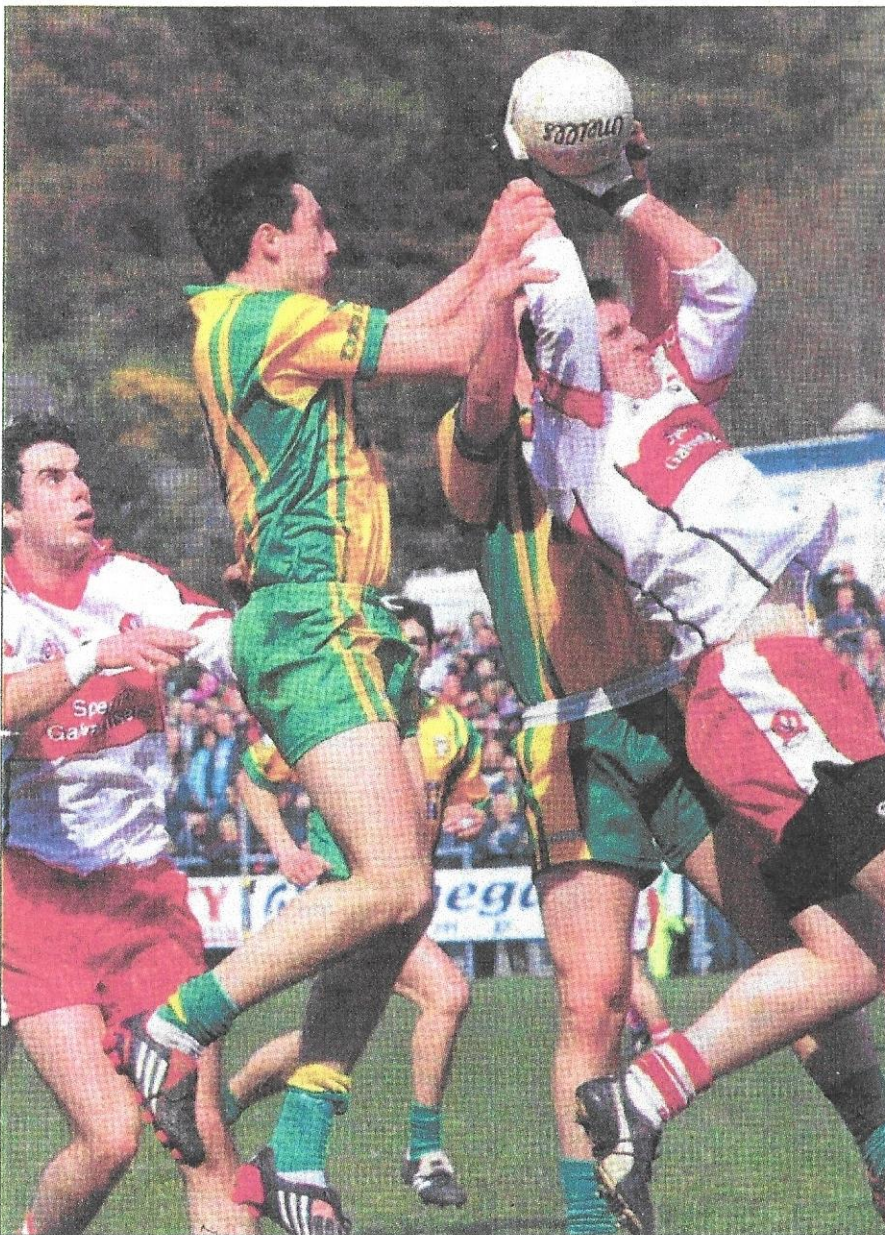
Laois: C Gorman; P O'Leary, M Timmons, C Healy; D Murphy (0-1), D Rooney, P McMahon (1-0); B Quigley, J O'Loughlin; B McCormaic, P Lawler (1-0), B Sheehan; M Tierney (0-2, 45), C Kelly (0-1), R Munnelly (0-2). Subs., D Brennan (0-2) for Mac Cormaic; J Higgins for Murphy; B McDonald for Munnelly.

Referee: Eugene Murtagh (Longford).

Man of the match

Colm McFadden was quite good for Donegal but by far the best performer on the field was Laois full-forward Colm Kelly, who gave a great display and he should have ended up on the winning team.

Donegal come up short



Donegal 0-10
Derry 0-15

Peter Campbell
at O'Donnell Park



Donegal have plenty of work to do before they meet Derry in the championship on the evidence of their league clash in O'Donnell Park, Letterkenny on Sunday.

The Oak Leafers qualified for the league final as they ran Donegal ragged in the second quarter to lead by 0-10 to 0-3 at the break.

There was little to cheer the Donegal support in attendance in the first half as they could only manage three pointed frees despite having plenty of opportunities in the opening 20 minutes.

The home side were much improved in the second half as the encounter became a muck keener contest, closer to championship fare, but when they got back within four points they weren't able to close the deal. Donegal manager, Brian McIver, had to contend with his son, Michael, fielding for Derry and when Donegal were in the ascendancy in the second half, McIver Jnr popped up to hit Derry's first point in 18 minutes with just three minutes left on the clock.

Derry were majestic in the opening half and were never headed. They led 0-3 to 0-1 after 12 minutes and four points in-a-row from Conleth Gilligan (2), Fergal Doherty and a Paddy Bradley free between the 22nd and 29th minutes put them five clear.

Close to half-time Paddy Bradley added two more quick frees as Derry led 0-10 to 0-3 at the break. Donegal had just three frees, the opening one from Michael Hegarty on 10 minutes while Colm McFadden landed frees in the 19th and 33rd minutes. They had a couple of goal chances, both falling to Leon Thompson, but each time he was crowded out while Conall Dunne and Brian Roper wasted three great point opportunities.

The entire Donegal front-line seemed unable to retain possession against a tight Derry defence. Leon Thompson was probably the most guilty but he was also the hardest worker and should not have been the

first to be taken off early in the second half.

The half-time break allowed Brian McIver re-organise Donegal and they had their first score of the game from play inside 10 seconds of the restart, Leon Thompson was the scorer.

Three points from Colm McFadden had Donegal back within five points with just nine minutes of the second half but it took further re-organisation by the home team with Kevin Cassidy going to mid-field before they really got back in contention.

Points from substitutes Frank McGlynn and Christy Toye reduced the margin to four by the 56th minute.

But the home side were just not able to close the gap any further despite having some good chances. And then McIver Jnr added to Brian's misery by getting Derry's 14th point and it was followed quickly by an Enda Muldoon free.

In the final minute, Michael Hegarty drove through for Donegal to win a penalty in the 70th minute but Michael Doherty's penalty kick went well over the crossbar. Derry's Kevin McGuckin received a second yellow for the tackle on Hegarty.

The penalty miss is another in a long line for Donegal in recent times. Colm McFadden had already failed twice in the league, against Kerry and Mayo, and Tyrone last year in the Ulster semi-final, while Michael Murphy failed against Westmeath also last summer.

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Shane McGowan; Eamon McGee, Barry Monaghan, Kevin Cassidy; Stephen McDermott, Kevin Rafferty; Rory Kavanagh, Michael Hegarty (0-1,f), Brian Roper; Leon Thompson (0-1), Colm McFadden (0-5,3f), Conall Dunne.

Subs: Frank McGlynn (0-1) for McGowan; Paddy McDaid for McDermott; Christy Toye (0-1) for Thompson; Michael Doherty (0-1,pen) for Dunne.

Derry: Barry Gillis; Kevin McGuckin, Kevin McCloy, Francis McEldowney; Liam Hinchey, Gerard O'Kane, Michael McIver (0-1); Fergal Doherty (0-1), James Conway (0-1); Mark Lynch (0-1), Barry McGoldrick, Enda Muldoon (0-1,f); Conleth Gilligan (0-3,2f), Paddy Bradley (0-6,3f), Eoin Bradley (0-1).

Subs: Joe Diver for McGoldrick; Niall McCosker for O'Kane; Paul Murphy for E Bradley; Raymond Wilkinson for Gilligan.

Rory Kavanagh contests this midfield battle for Donegal on Sunday in Letterkenny. (1504cg38)