

2009

Team Manager: John Joe Doherty

Dr. Mc Kenna Cup.

1	2 nd Jan		Donegal	3-14	UUJ	0-13
2	11 th Jan		Donegal	0-11	Fermanagh	1-05
3	18 th Jan	Dungiven	Donegal	0-13	Derry	0-13
4	21 st Jan	Healy Park	Donegal	1-14	Armagh	2-09
5	24 th Jan	Final Healy Park	Donegal	2-12	Queen's Uni.	0-11

Ulster Senior Football Championship

6	14 th June	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-12	Antrim	1-10
	19 th July	Ulster final	Tyrone	1-18	Antrim	0-15

All Ireland Qualifiers 2009

7	4 th July	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	2-13	Carlow	1-06
8	12 th July		Donegal	0-13	Clare	1-07
9	18 th July		Donegal	2-13	Derry	0-18
10	25 th July	Markievies Park	Donegal	0-14	Galway	0-13
11	2 nd Aug	Croke Park	Donegal	2-10	Cork	1-27
	23 rd Aug.	Semi Final	Cork	1-13	Tyrone	1-11
	30 th Aug	Semi final	Kerry	2-08	Meath	1-07
	20 th Sept.	Final	Kerry	0-16	Cork	1-09

National Football League. - 2009

Allianz NFL Division 1

12	1 st Feb	Austin Stack Park	Kerry	2-13	Donegal	0-11
13	14 th Feb	O'Donnell Park	Donegal	2-10	Mayo	1-13
14	8 th March	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	1-08	Dublin	0-13
15	15 th March	Pearse Stadium	Galway	1-16	Donegal	0-12
16	21 st March	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-11	Tyrone	0-08
17	12 th April	Mullingar	Westmeath	1-07	Donegal	0-15
18	12 th April	Watty Graham Park	Derry	0-14	Donegal	0-10
	Final		Kerry	1-15	Derry	0-15

Allianz GAA Football National League Roinn 1

Team	Pld	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
Kerry	7	6	1	0	114	83	31	13
Derry	7	4	1	2	101	81	20	9
Galway	7	4	1	2	106	92	14	9
Mayo	7	2	3	2	90	85	5	7
Tyrone	7	3	1	3	96	97	-1	7
Dublin	7	2	2	3	124	110	14	6
Donegal	7	2	1	4	86	99	-13	5
Westmeath	7	0	0	7	68	138	-70	0

Gaelic Life Dr. McKenna Cup, Section One

John Joe off to winning start

DONEGAL 3-14
UUJ 0-13

Report: Peter Campbell
Photos: Conor McGonagle

If a good start is half the battle, then John Joe Doherty can be very pleased with his team's display in his first competitive game in charge on Sunday when Donegal proved much too strong for Jordanstown in MacCumbhail Park.

Although short his preferred captain, Rory Kavanagh, and a number of other panellists, Doherty saw his side give a polished display which had a more direct style than in the past few years.

The mixture of youth and experience worked well with Brian Roper (captain for the day) excelling up front alongside Stephen Griffin, while at the back Barry Monaghan gave one of his best displays in a Donegal jersey alongside very impressive newcomer, Charlie Byrne from Malin.

There were welcome returns also from long-term injury for Brendan Boyle and Leon Thompson while Ciaran Bonner also showed plenty of appetite after almost a year out.

Donegal led by 0-9 to 0-5 at the break and could

have been much further ahead as they hit six wides, some of them from good positions late in the half.

Some of their scores were very well constructed with Brendan Boyle providing some great first-time ball and Brian Roper creating and scoring chances.

Stephen Griffin hit five first half points, opening the scoring from a free after three minutes and closing with his only other free two minutes from the break.

The other points came from Roper (2), Ciaran Bonner (2) and Leon Thompson. At one stage Donegal led by 0-5 to 0-1 and again by 0-8 to 0-3.

but thanks to three pointed frees from Ciaran Donnelly (two of them top class from near the sideline) and two from play from Stephen McAleer and half-back Brendan Boggs, kept the Poly in touch.

However, the Students were hit a bitter blow on the 18th and 20th minutes when they lost two players to yellow cards under the new experimental rules. Stephen McAleer, who was probably their best player at that stage, was very unlucky as he came in to tackle Barry Monaghan who was stretching to take a poor pass. The tackle was clumsy and it was the end of McAleer's involvement. Two minutes later he was joined by half-forward Kieran Nolan.

Jordanstown had to adjust with full-forward Niall McKeever going to midfield.

After the half-time team talk the Students were much improved early in the second half and points from Thomas McCann inside 30 seconds, Niall McKeever and a Donnelly free to two from Stephen Griffin, had them within three points with eight minutes of the new half gone.

They were struck a severe blow two minutes later as Donegal got their first goal. There was a certain amount of fortune involved as Ciaran Bonner went for a point from a narrow angle but the ball came in low across the goal and Brian Roper got in front of his marker to palm home from close range.

Stephen Griffin added a point within a minute and suddenly Donegal were well clear, 1-12 to 0-8. Ciaran Donnelly (free) and Ciaran Bonner traded points before Jordanstown hit three unanswered points from Donnelly (two frees) and Danny Mulholland to reduce the margin to four once more with 10 minutes left.

But there was to be no fairytale ending as Donegal struck for the second goal in the 62nd minute. A Ross Wherity centre was contested by Stephen Griffin and it fell to Michael Doherty who was hauled back as he went for goal. From the penalty, Stephen Griffin fired to Greg Kelly's left to end the game as a contest.

Ciaran Bonner added a point before Ross Wherity

put the gloss finish on the result, hammering home in style from 20 metres with three minutes left.

Ciaran Donnelly had the final point, his eighth pointed free in the 69th minute but overall it was a mediocre display from the Students who were just a pale shadow of the side which defeated Donegal at the same stage last year.

For John Joe Doherty, it was a very satisfactory start, given that there was hardly any preparation. There was also very good discipline in the side losing only Paddy McDaid to a yellow card with ten minutes left. McDaid's yellow saw the return to county colours of Raymond Sweeney, who was one of a number of players that were drafted late into the Donegal panel because of injury, holidays, etc.

The win sets Donegal up well for their second game in the group when they have Fermanagh in Ft. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon on Sunday next. Fermanagh drew their first game at home to Derry on Sunday.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Eamonn McGee, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne, Barry Monaghan, Shane McGowan; Neil Gallagher, Brendan Boyle (0-1); Ciaran Bonner (0-3), David Walsh, Brian Roper (1-2); Leon Thompson (0-1), Ryan Bradley, Stephen Griffin (1-7, pen. 2f). Subs., Ross Wherity (1-0) for Walsh; Michael Doherty for Bradley; Raymond Sweeney for McDaid; Kevin McMenamin for Thompson; Odhran Doherty for Roper

UUJ: Greg Kelly; Aidan Girvan, Colm Murney, Gareth Haughey; Conor Galligan, Darren Hughes, Brendan Boggs (0-1); James Colgan, Stephen McAleer (0-1); Kieran Nolan, Thomas McCann (0-1), Ciaran Donnelly (0-8, 8f); Declan Murphy, Niall McKeever (0-1), Danny Mulholland (0-1). Subs., Kevin Anderson for McAleer; Peter Hughes for Nolan; Sean Murdock for D Murphy; Cathal

McCaffrey for Colgan

Referee: Martin Sludden (Tyrone)

Yellow cards - Donegal: Paddy McDaio, UUJ: Stephen McAleer, Kieran Nolan.

Man of the match

Ciaran Donnelly was the only Jordanstown player who excelled but for Donegal there were plenty of contenders including Charlie Byrne, Brian Roper and Stephen Griffin. Roper had a marvellous game, both scoring and linking defence and attack. However, the award goes to Griffin who hit 1-7 and showed that if he gets a reasonable supply, he can certainly hit the target.

Turning point

The first goal 10 minutes into the second half certainly gave Donegal a clear edge. Brian Roper did well to get in front of his man to get to Ciaran Bonner's cross, although it seemed as if Bonner was going for a point.

Ref watch

There was great anticipation about the new experimental rules but in fairness the game was played very sportingly and accordingly referee, Martin Sludden, had an easy enough task and performed it well. The three yellow cards could not be argued with although Stephen McAleer was very unlucky as he his 'tackle' on Barry Monaghan was exacerbated because Monaghan had received a poor pass and was stretching at the time.

Donegal make it two out of two

Donegal more or less booked their place in the last four of the Dr McKenna Cup with victory over Fermanagh at a windswept Fr Tierney Park in Ballyshannon on Sunday.

With two wins from two games and just one fixture remaining – away to Derry next Sunday Donegal top Section A on four points, while Derry and Fermanagh have only a point apiece, which means only University of Ulster Jordanstown can catch John Joe Doherty's side. Donegal have a healthy scoring difference compared with the students after a 3-14 to 0-13 win on opening day.

UUJ registered a surprise victory over Derry on Sunday, but will have to beat Fermanagh by a significant scoreline in Enniskillen tomorrow night if they are to dislodge Donegal off the top spot.

While it is hard to read much into games at this time of year, manager Doherty will be pleased with his progress thus far, and qualification and the prospect of a fourth game will provide further warm up for the National Football League.

Neil Gallagher produced a man of the match display in the middle of the field and along with Brendan Boyle, who once again started well before fading, gave their side a firm foothold in the middle.

Class

Conall Dunne turned in a top class performance at centre-forward and proved a good link between attack and midfield, while Kevin McMenamin had a good second half and ended up the top scorer with four points; three of them from frees. Odhran Doherty and Leon Thompson showed good promise in the first half but were not near as effective after the break.

In a defence that was not overworked, Paddy McDaid, Barry Monaghan, Charlie Byrne and Frank McGlynn were most prominent.

For the second week in a row Donegal were once again experimental side and the team showed five changes – one in defence and four in attack – from the previous weekend's victory over UUJ.

Donegal	0-11
Fermanagh	1-5

Tom Comack reports
Photos by Thomas Gallagher

Aodh Ruadh's Johnny Gallagher replaced Shane McGowan in defence with Ciaran Bonner, David Walsh, Ryan Bradley and Stephen Griffin making way for Dunne, Odhran Doherty, McMenamin and Michael Doherty.

Amazingly too, the game only produced the one yellow card – Fermanagh's Eamonn Maguire after second offence late in the game – and Donegal led more or less from the off.

Playing with the advantage of a strong wind, Donegal were first out of the traps

Brian Roper almost got his 147th game, which equalled Matt Gallagher's record, off to a dream start when his strike on goal was almost deflected into his own net by Fermanagh corner back Paul Johnson.

That was before Odhran Doherty broke the deadlock inside nine minutes and Michael Doherty added a second two minutes later.

While Seamus Ryder got Fermanagh off the mark minutes later, Donegal continued to dominate and were 0-5 to 0-1 up by the 19-minute mark courtesy of points from McMenamin, Odhran Doherty and Dunne.

Points from Ryder, Daniel Kille and Ryan Keenan reduced the margin to two before Neil Gallagher made it a three-point game again to send his side in at the break in front, 0-6 to 0-3.

Donegal started the second half in positive mood and with Roper and McMenamin finding the target in the opening four minutes of the second period, they moved five ahead.

Hammer

And just when it seemed they might pull away, the home team were rocked back on their heels when Ryder hit the net to throw the Ernesiders a lifeline. Ryder, one of four Belleek men in the Fermanagh line-up, did well on a limited supply but capitalised on a moment of hesitancy in defence to hammer to the net.

All of a sudden the margin was back to two points and with a half hour still on the clock and the elements favouring Fermanagh, it was game on again. But Donegal responded in a positive fashion and in the space of four minutes McMenamin from a 35-metre free and a neat effort from play had more or less wiped out Ryder's goal.

Fermanagh did rally with two Kille pointed frees on 49 and 63 minutes but Donegal were not to be denied and second half substitute Kevin Rafferty sealed the deal with a late white flag five minutes from the end.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Johnny Gallagher, Eamonn McGee, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne.

Barry Monaghan, Frank McGlynn; Neil Gallagher (0-1), Brendan Boyle; Odhran Doherty (0-2), Conall Dunne (0-1), Brian Roper (0-1); Kevin McMenamin (0-4, 3f), Michael Doherty (0-1), Leon Thompson.

Subs: Kevin Rafferty (0-1) for O Doherty; Ciaran Bonner B Roper *inj); Ross Wherity for O Doherty; Stephen Griffin for L Thompson.

Fermanagh: Ronan Gallagher; Hugh Brady, Shane Lynons, Paul Johnston; Raymond Johnson, Shane McDermott, Tom McElroy; Ryan Carson, Shane O'Brien; Ciaran McElroy, Ryan Keenan (0-1), Eamonn Maguire; James Connolly, Seamus Ryder (1-1), Daniel Kille (0-3, 2f).

Subs: James Sherry for R Keenan; Pat Cadden for E Maguire, (yellow).

Referee: Stephen McNamee (Tyrone).

Man of the Match

Neil Gallagher was lord and master in the middle of the field for the 70 plus minutes and provided his team with a solid platform in the this sector in both the aerial and ground combat. While he got forward to score an excellent point before half-time he was at his best between the two 45's in an all round first class performance.

Turning Point

Donegal may have got off to a flying start and led for most the game but Kevin 'Wappa' McMenamin's two points response to Seamus Ryder's goal in the early minutes which reduced the margin two points finally turned the game back in favour of the winners.

Ref Watch

Tyrone official Stephen McNamee showed a number of black cards and just one yellow card and by and large let the game flow and took a sensible approach in difficult conditions even if he was a little lenient at times on the new yellow card rule.

GAA - Gaelic Life Dr McKenna Cup, Group A

DERRY 0-13
DONEGAL 0-13REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT
O'CAGHAN PARK, DUNGIVEN
PHOTOS BY MICHAEL O'DONNELL

DONEGAL remain unbeaten in 2009, as John Joe Doherty's charges were denied a third successive victory by a pair of late frees by Derry's Eoghan Brown in yesterday's final Group A game in the Gaelic Life Dr McKenna Cup in Dungiven.

In the bitterly cold O'Caghan Park, Donegal came from three points down at the interval to lead by two as the game swung into its final five minutes.

There, Brown put two frees between the Donegal posts to level things up, while the corner forward missed a late chance to win it after Barry Monaghan was penalised for overcarrying a minute into stoppage time.

With qualification already assured following Fermanagh's win over UUJ on Wednesday night, Doherty used the chance to do some tinkering with his outfit.

In all, the Glencolmcille man made nine alterations from the team that saw off the challenge of Fermanagh a week earlier in Ballyshannon. Kilcar man Eamon McGinley made his first ever Donegal appearance at any level in goal, while captain Rory Kavanagh, along with Ray Sweeney, Kevin Rafferty, Shane McGowan, Ciaran Bonner, David Walsh, Ryan Bradley and Stephen Griffin came back in from the off.

For the second-half, Doherty handed out another debut with Milford goalkeeper Caolan McGettigan (who was impressive for the Northwest team in the Regional League last Tuesday) coming in for his first senior appearance.

Derry, who are also under new management this year with Damien Cassidy at the helm, made six changes to their starting fifteen for the game, which represented the first senior intercounty game at Dungiven's O'Caghan Park in a decade (the last being a National Hurling League fixture between Derry and Waterford).

Donegal started well, despite the testing underfoot conditions on a surface that was only deemed playable just before midday with a Kevin McMenamin free putting them in front on two minutes.

Enda Lynn (who had caused Donegal U21s so much bother in the U21 Championship last year) levelled after a delightful pickup took him away from stand-in centre-back Rafferty before Seamus Bradley put the Oak Leafers ahead.

By that stage, Derry had keeper Shane McGuckin for having them in front. The custodian did well to

MATCH STATS

Derry/Donegal

Goals	0/0
Points	13/13
Wides	6/9
45s	1/1
Frees awarded	23/31
Frees scored	3/6
Short efforts	2/5
Yellow cards	3/2
Red cards	0/0

thwart Ryan Bradley, by turning the Buncrana man's shot around for a '45' after he was picked out in acres of space by a fine angled ball by Stephen Griffin.

The St Naul's man restored parity with a fabulous 40-metre free but again Seamus Bradley was on hand to put Derry back in the lead, only for another well-executed kick by Griffin to tie it up for the third time.

A minute later, McMenamin put Donegal ahead for the first time with his second of the day after Brian Og McAlary was penalised for touching the ball on the ground.

The game continued to tic-tac and a fantastic score by Gavin McShane, who did magnificently well to hold off the attention of Johnny Gallagher, and an eager point by wing-back Paul Cartin sandwiched Donegal's first point from play - fisted over by Griffin after good work by Rafferty.

Four minutes from the break, Bradley had a second sight of goal when he was picked out by Shane McGowan, only for the ball to slip from his grasp as he was about to swivel for the target.

If Donegal started well, it was Derry who ended the half well and the home side were three to the good at the interval, Seamus Bradley scoring twice and Gavin McShane on target to make it 0-8 to 0-5.

Bradley's second point on the stroke of the break should have ended in a greater reward for the red and white. Having been picked out by Brown, he shot over the bar under pressure from McGinley.

Interestingly, all bar one of Donegal's scores in the first half were frees, while Derry scored seven from play in that time and the visitors weren't helped by the dismissal of Ciaran Bonner, who was yellow carded on 31 minutes.

The game began to swing in Donegal's favour following the 43rd minute introduction of Neil Gallagher to the play. By that stage, his side trailed by three again as McMenamin and Griffin kept the green and gold in check with Brown and Lynn registering sublime scores at the other end.

Gallagher's introduction added a new dimension to Donegal and after Griffin and Brown traded scores;

Donegal scored five unanswered points between the 50th and 64th minutes.

Granted, Derry's cause wasn't helped by the loss of Joe Diver, Paul Cartin and Patsy Bradley in that period, but Donegal worked the ball well with McMenamin, Gallagher and Walsh to the fore.

Walsh reduced the arrears to two points, before Gallagher stuck a fine point, via an upright, from out the right flank to make it a one-point game for the first time in the second half.

The sides were level when Walsh fisted over from McMenamin's clever assist and sub Brendan Boyle put Donegal into the driving seat before that advantage was doubled courtesy of a neat Walsh point, after the Naomh Brid man sold a teasing dummy to Chris McKaigue.

But, Derry hit back with Brown raising two late white flags to level matters up - the first of those coming after Rafferty became the second Donegal man to see yellow for a pull on Paul Young.

In the bigger picture, this contest pales into insignificance, but still it was a valuable workout that keeps the unbeaten tag preserved for another game. And Doherty will again have been pleased with the contributions of Stephen Griffin, David Walsh, Kevin McMenamin and Neil Gallagher.

DERRY: Shane McGuckin; Brian Og Alary, Sean Marty Lockhart, Michael Drum; Paul Cartin (0-1), Chris McKaigue, Barry McGuigan; Joe Diver, Patsy Bradley; Enda Lynn (0-3), Paul Young, Brian Mullan; Seamus Bradley (0-2, 1f), Gavin McShane (0-2), Eoghan Brown (0-5, 2f). Subs: Aidan McAlary for Diver (47 mins); Michael McBride for Cartin (50 mins); Paul Murphy for McShane (56 mins); Cailin O'Boyle for P. Bradley (59 mins); Kevin O'Connor for Young (66 mins).

Yellow cards: Joe Diver (47 mins); Paul Cartin (50 mins); Patsy Bradley (59 mins).

DONEGAL: Eamon McGinley; Johnny Gallagher, Raymond Sweeney, Paddy McDaid; Eamon McGee, Kevin Rafferty, Shane McGowan, Ciaran Bonner, Rory Kavanagh; Michael Doherty, David Walsh (0-3), Odhran Doherty; Kevin McMenamin (0-3, 2f), Ryan Bradley, Stephen Griffin (0-5, 4f). Subs: Barry Monaghan for Bonner (32 mins); Caolan McGettigan for McGinley (half-time); Conall Dunne for O. Doherty (43 mins); Neil Gallagher (0-1) for Bradley (43 mins); Brendan Boyle (0-1) for Kavanagh (58 mins); Charlie Byrne for Rafferty (66 mins).

Yellow cards: Ciaran Bonner (32 mins); Kevin Rafferty (66 mins).

REFEREE: Gregory Walsh (Antrim).

The game continued to tic-tac and a fantastic score by Gavin McShane, who did magnificently well to hold off the attention of Johnny Gallagher, and an eager point by wing-back Paul Cartin sandwiched Donegal's first point from play - fisted over by Griffin after good work by Rafferty.

Walsh the star as Donegal book place in final

DONEGAL ARMAGH 1-14 2-09

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT HEALY PARK.

PHOTOS BY DONNA MCBRIDE

DAVID Walsh was the star of the show as Donegal booked their place in the final of the Gaelic Life Dr McKenna Cup thanks to this two-point win over Armagh in a lively and well-contested semi final at Healy Park on Wednesday night.

The Naomh Brid forward scored 1-4 from play to continue his good recent form and help Donegal over the line. But the Tir Chonaill faithful were made sweat in a game their side deserved to win, as it took a heroic last-ditch block from Termon's Paddy Mc-

Daid on Ronan Clarke to seal progression at the expense of the great rivals from the Orchard County.

Donegal led 0-10 to 0-7 at half time, with nine of those points coming from play, but a cheeky chipped goal by Kevin O'Rourke and a Paddy McKeever three-pointer from a rebound after Durcan beat out a Clarke penalty, ensured a tense finish with Walsh's goal keeping Donegal in the driving seat.

Unbeaten in three games thanks to wins over UUU and Fermanagh, along with a draw in Derry on Sunday, John Joe was keen to persevere that record and true to his word the Glencolmille man opted to line out a strong first fifteen, re-drafting Brendan Boyle and Neil Gallagher to centrefield, allowing him to deploy a half-forward line of captain Rory Kavanagh, Conall Dunne and Ciaran Bonner.

There were also recalls for Paul Durcan, Charlie Byrne and Barry Monaghan, who was lining out in the Donegal colours for his 100th senior appearance, against an Armagh side that had an unfamiliar look to it, aside from the likes of James Lavery, Martin O'Rourke, Brian Mallon, Peadar Toal and the ever-dangerous Ronan Clarke.

Stephen Griffin and Brendan Boyle got Donegal off to a good start and the lead was out to three points as early as the eighth minute as Walsh fired over from good McMenamin endeavour ahead of a 35-metre point from Griffin after Joe Feeney spun round to fire over the first Armagh score.

A Peadar Toal free and a point from play by Feeney had Armagh back to within a point again, but Donegal were two to the good again when McMenamin got his angles right following a good forward run by the impressive Charlie Byrne.

Armagh boss Peter McDonnell sensed trouble and moved Vincie Martin out to Rory Kavanagh with Tony McClelland going into the full-back slot. Feeney got the better of Raymond Sweeney to make it a one-point game again in the 17th minute.

Donegal had double scores between the sides in the next eight minutes, though. Kevin McMenamin showed well again on Wednesday night and he was out well to win a long ball from Neil Gallagher to tee up Walsh. The stylish Walsh opted to go for the jugular and attempted to chip into Philip McEvoy's net, but was left to settle for a point.

Walsh was on target again three minutes later, again from a McMenamin assist when Griffin and Boyle had laid the groundwork. Charlie Byrne came up the field to get his name deservedly on the scoresheet and make it 0-8 to 0-4 with 25 minutes on the clock.

Griffin fired over from a standing position under pressure and the St Naul's man scored Donegal's first from the deadball on 35 minutes with a free to take the green and gold's first-half tally to ten points.

But a lack of discipline at the back and the tendency to get penalised for dissent was to prove a frustrating aspect for Donegal fans in the dying minutes of the first period. Peadar Toal knocked over a pair of frees and Ronan Clarke ended the first-half scoring with a free in stoppage time. Two of those had been moved to scoreable positions after referee Aidan McAlynn brought them forward, leaving Donegal three in front at the changeover.

Clarke opened the second-half scoring with a free, but Walsh and McMe-

namin (free) re-affirmed Donegal's four-point advantage.

On 51 minutes, the game was firmly back in the melting pot again when Kevin O'Rourke succeeded where Walsh had narrowly failed in the first-half, as he chipped over the head of Durcan and into the net after a quick free had parted the Tir Chonaill rear-guard.

David Walsh lost his footing as he was about to pull the trigger after being released by quick thinking from Eamon McGee. But Walsh did get the goal his showing deserved after Boyle and O'Rourke traded points.

Tony McClelland was guilty of a

sloppy pass out of defence and Walsh was on it in a flash. Having intercepted the full-back's error, Walsh sped in and curled a delightful effort around the advancing McEvoy to make it 1-13 to 1-09 with just over ten minutes remaining.

Walsh was forced to limp off soon after though and the tense finish was ensured when Clarke was taken down after rounding Sweeney and Durcan for a certain goal, leaving referee McAlynn with no option but to award a penalty. Paul Durcan guessed right to save from Clarke, but Paddy McKeever reacted quickest and hammered high into the net.

Substitute Michael Doherty kept his cool to strike over a '45' into the drizzle. Armagh laid seize on the Donegal goal late on in an attempt to salvage the contest and perhaps force extra-time, at least.

One high dropping garryowen into the mixer concluded with Kevin O'Rourke losing his footing at the vital second and with the three minutes of stoppage time gone there was still time for late drama when Clarke went down and Armagh's appeals fell on deaf ears, with the block by Paddy McDaid securing Donegal's place in tomorrow night's decider.

Although perhaps still with something to think about in the full-back line, Doherty will have taken note of a good display by Malin's Charlie Byrne, who looks like he has played himself into the League panel, while Neil Gallagher, Brendan Boyle, Conall Dunne, Kevin McMenamin, Stephen Griffin and Man-of-the-Match Walsh were the other top performers in green and gold.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Johnny Gallagher, Raymond Sweeney, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne (0-1), Barry Monaghan, Eamon McGee; Neil Gallagher, Brendan Boyle (0-2); Ciaran Bonner, Conall Dunne, Rory Kavanagh; Kevin McMenamin (0-2, 1f), Stephen Griffin (0-4, 1f), David Walsh (1-4). Subs: Michael Doherty (0-1, 1 '45') for Bonner (56 mins), Leon Thompson for Walsh (60 mins).

ARMAGH: Philip McEvoy; Gareth Smyth, Vincie Martin, Barry Shannon; Chris Rafferty, Tony

McClelland, Barry McDonald; James Lavery, Shane O'Neill; Martin O'Rourke, Brian Mallon, Peadar

Toal (0-3, 3f); Joe Feeney (0-3), Ronan Clarke (0-2, 2f), Kevin O'Rourke (1-1). Subs: Malachy Mackin and Neil O'Rourke for Martin and Smyth (34 mins), Paddy McKeever (1-0) for Feeney (42 mins), Barry Toner for McDonald (51 mins), Conor Clarke for M O'Rourke (69 mins).

Yellow card: Martin O'Rourke (69 mins).

REFEREE: Aidan McAlynn (Derry).

MATCH STATS

	Donegal/Armagh
Goals	1/2
Points	14/9
Wides	8/7
45s	2/1
Frees awarded	18/19
Frees scored	2/5
Short efforts	3/1
Yellow cards	0/1
Red cards	0/0

GAA - GAELIC LIFE DR MCKENNA CUP FINAL

Donegal finish well to win first McKenna Cup since '91

DONEGAL 2-12
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY 0-11
after extra time

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT HEALY PARK PHOTOS BY DECLAN DOHERTY

DONEGAL won their first Dr McKenna Cup since 1991 on Saturday night as they overcame Queen's University, Belfast after extra time in wretched conditions at Omagh's Healy Park.

Goals in the extra period by David Walsh and Ryan Bradley helped Donegal pull away from an impressive Queen's unit who are gearing up for a Wednesday week shoot-out with their rivals from UUI in the Sigerson Cup.

That earned John Joe Doherty his first piece of silverware as manager, just a few short weeks into his tenure and keeps the unbeaten tag still clinging to his outfit as they make their way to the Kingdom this weekend to begin their National League campaign:

On Saturday night, his team looked in trouble for long spells and trailed 0-8 to 0-5 at the interval with the slick and sharp students reaping the benefits of the extra mileage in collective training.

Following the switch of Ciaran Bonner back to midfield to keep tabs on Charlie Vernon, however, Donegal began to get a foothold on things and by the 15th minute of the second half they were ahead.

Queen's managed just two points in the second-half, both from Shaun O'Neill, but they were still ahead as the game swung into its dying moment when Neil Gallagher turned over a brilliant equaliser.

And Conor Bayne's missed free ensured the decent crowd of followers huddled together in the stand had to endure another 20 minutes in the bitter Omagh weather that made conditions particularly tricky for the participants.

At the conclusion, it was the green and gold ribbons that adorned the Gaelic Life sponsored trophy, lifted by Barry Monaghan, who accepted the crown from Ulster Council President Tom Daly (who is from Ballyshannon), with skipper Rory Kavanagh having been told that he couldn't climb the steps to collect the prize after being dismissed for a 69th minute yellow card offence.

Donegal showed just one change to the team that saw off the challenge of Armagh in Wednesday night's semi final. A slight injury ruled Johnny Gallagher out of the reckoning allowing Frank McGlynn to return to the starting fifteen at corner back.

On the subs bench, Eoin Waide and Colin McCarron were drafted in to the panel, along with newcomer Ronan MacNiallais, whose reward for an impressive display for the Northwest in a recent Regional League game was a place in the matchday 30 for the final.

With a heavy breeze blowing the Tyrone rain and sleet into their faces, Donegal will have been reasonably content with departing for the half-time refreshments just three points in arrears.

The warning signs were there for the Tir Chonaill men from an early stage, as Sean Leo McGoldrick raised

the game's first flag inside 15 seconds of the start before Shaun O'Neill fired a warning sign to Raymond Sweeney having spun over point number two.

Eamon McGee responded for Donegal, but points from James Kielt (free) and James Loughrey had Aidan O'Rourke's eager and hungry students 0-4 to 0-1 in command with the clock showing just 6 minutes gone.

Two Stephen Griffin frees had Donegal back to within a point by the end of the first quarter of an hour. Donegal could have been ahead by this stage, but Conall Dunne got his angles wrong after a good solo run down the middle and the St Eunan's attacker dropped his next shot into the arms of goalkeeper Murphy.

Kielt made it a two-point game again before the impressive Kilrea man turned provider for Conor Maginn to get in on the act. After Kevin McMenamin atoned for an earlier miss by putting a free over the bar, Kielt was out to collect a quick free and send over a stunning score and two minutes later captain Paul Courtney found the range from 40 metres and it was 0-8 to 0-4.

McMenamin brought Donegal back to within a goal before the start of the second period and within eight minutes of the re-start the game was level for the first time as Griffin (free), Boyle and Bonner were on target - Boyle's the pick of them after he got on the end of a move that came from Paul Durcan plucking a Justin Crozier effort from the sky.

Kevin McMenamin took a pass from Barry Monaghan (who made his 101st appearance on Saturday night) to put Donegal ahead and it looked as if there was only going to be one winner.

Donegal lost their way somewhat and a pair of points from O'Neill had Queen's ahead. O'Neill was then sent to the line after being ticked for a second time while conditions were getting worse by the minute, making the contest a lottery of sorts.

Neil Gallagher raised the Donegal voices a minute from time to set up the grandstand finish when he majestically pointed from Frank McGlynn's pass back. Conor Bayne - who missed a 20 metre free three minutes earlier - then had a chance to re-write history, but he fluffed his lines after Ray Sweeney was yellow carded for fouling Kielt 20 metres from the posts.

Donegal took command right from the off in the extra time - Gallagher palming the throw-in down for Bonner, who finished off with a point. Eight minutes into the first period, Donegal netted their first goal. Bonner's effort dropped dangerously and 'keeper Murphy spilled under pres-

sure from Bradley.

David Walsh picked up the pieces

and drilled home his second goal in week.

Kielt and Walsh traded points either side of the extra-time interval, but Donegal sewed up the win three minutes left when sub Ryan Bradley capitalised on another piece of hesitancy from Murphy, as he profited from close range to seal a seven-point victory that rounded off a fine Gaelic Life Dr McKenna Cup month for John Joe and company.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Raymond Sweeney, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne, Barry Monaghan, Eamon McGee (0-1); Neil Gallagher (0-1), Brendan Boyle (0-1); Ciaran Bonner (0-2), Conall Dunne, Rory Kavanagh; Kevin McMenamin (0-3, 2f), Stephen Griffin (0-3, 3f), David Walsh (1-1). Subs: Michael Doherty for Boyle (59 mins); Leon Thompson for Dunne (67 mins); Eoin Waide for Kavanagh (69 mins); Ryan Bradley (1-0) for Sweeney (70 mins); Brendan Boyle for McGlynn (85 mins).

Yellow cards: Rory Kavanagh (69 mins); Raymond Sweeney (70 mins).

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY: Fergal Murphy; Aidan McCrory, Luke Howard, Ryan Dillon; Deaghlan Ó hAigain, Brendan McArdle, Justin Crozier; Charlie Vernon, Paul Courtney (0-1); James Loughrey (0-1), Conor Maginn (0-1), Sean Leo McGoldrick (0-1); James Kielt (0-4, 2f), Shaun O'Neill (0-3), Conor Bayne. Subs: Liam Morrow for McArdle (35 mins); Paul McVey for O'Neill (65 mins); Brendan Martin for Morrow (65 mins); Ciaran Leonard for Bayne (85 mins).

Yellow cards: Brendan McArdle (65 mins), Shaun O'Neill (64 mins).

REFEREE: Padraig Hughes (Armagh)

GAA - GAELIC LIFE DR MCKENNA CUP FINAL

DONEGAL 2-12
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY 0-11
 after extra time

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT HEALY PARK PHOTOS BY DECLAN DOHERTY

DONEGAL won their first Dr McKenna Cup since 1991 on Saturday night as they overcame Queen's University, Belfast after extra time in wretched conditions at Omagh's Healy Park.

Goals in the extra period by David Walsh and Ryan Bradley helped Donegal pull away from an impressive Queen's unit who are gearing up for a Wednesday week shoot-out with their rivals from UUI in the Sigerson Cup.

That earned John Joe Doherty his first piece of silverware as manager, just a few short weeks into his tenure and keeps the unbeaten tag still clinging to his outfit as they make their way to the Kingdom this weekend to begin their National League campaign.

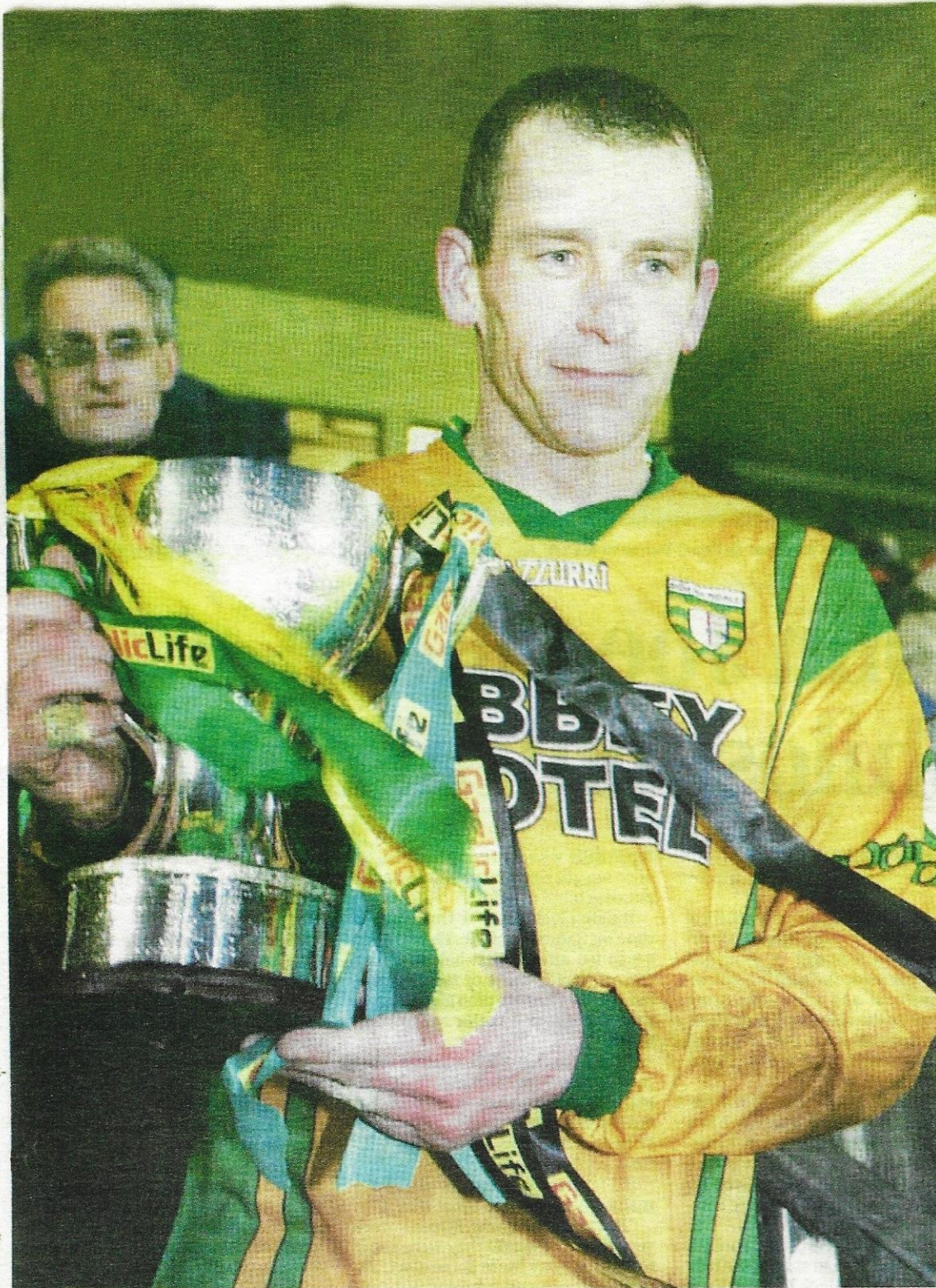
DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Raymond Sweeney, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne, Barry Monaghan, Eamon McGee (0-1); Neil Gallagher (0-1), Brendan Boyle (0-1); Ciaran Bonner (0-2), Conall Dunne, Rory Kavanagh; Kevin McMenamin (0-3, 2f), Stephen Griffin (0-3, 3f), David Walsh (1-1). Subs: Michael Doherty for Boyle (59 mins); Leon Thompson for Dunne (67 mins); Eoin Waide for Kavanagh (69 mins); Ryan Bradley (1-0) for Sweeney (70 mins); Brendan Boyle for McGlynn (85 mins).

Yellow cards: Rory Kavanagh (69 mins); Raymond Sweeney (70 mins).

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY: Fergal Murphy; Aidan McCrory, Luke Howard, Ryan Dillon; Deaghlán Ó hÁgain, Brendan McArdle, Justin Crozier; Charlie Vernon, Paul Courtney (0-1); James Loughrey (0-1), Conor Maginn (0-1), Sean Leo McGoldrick (0-1); James Kielt (0-4, 2f), Shaun O'Neill (0-3), Conor Bayne. Subs: Liam Morrow for McArdle (35 mins); Paul McVey for O'Neill (65 mins); Brendan Martin for Morrow (65 mins); Ciaran Leonard for Bayne (85 mins).

Yellow cards: Brendan McArdle (35 mins); Shaun O'Neill (64 mins).

REFEREE: Padraig Hughes (Armagh).



Donegal's Barry Monaghan lifts the Gaelic Life Dr. McKenna Cup in Omagh on Saturday night.

GAA

ULSTER SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER FINAL



DONEGAL.....0-12

ANTRIM.....1-10

FROM CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY

JUST where Donegal go from here is anybody's guess.

Lifeless, disjointed and without so many basic traits, not least the fact that they registered a staggering 18 wides, John Joe Doherty's side succumbed to an embarrassing Ulster quarter final defeat to Antrim yesterday afternoon at Sean MacCumhaill Park.

Tomas McCann's 57th minute goal was enough for Liam Bradley's Antrim to record a first Ulster Championship victory in seven years and see them pull off the shock of the summer so far.

Their victory was a deserved one. Terry O'Neill played the sweeper's role to perfection, continually frustrating Donegal with his picking up of loose ball and generally being the thorn in the side, while Aodhan Gallagher was the Lord and Master at centrefield, where Donegal were anonymous for the most part.

On so many times, Donegal's use of the ball left a lot to be desired and particularly in front of the posts their old failings came back to haunt them once again. Rarely has a team had so much possession and so many chances, and still came off second best in a game.

After a winter of unrest that saw a drawn-out battle to replace Brian McIver and a poor spring, which began with a McKenna Cup triumph, that ended with League relegation, Donegal came into summer time seeking a morale-boosting win.

And many believed the fact that Donegal were drawn on the so-called 'easier' side of the Championship draw would lead to an upsurge in fortunes. But the search for a first Anglo Celt since 1992 will roll on for another summer and on ves-

terday's fare it could be quite a while before it is recaptured.

Neil McGee won his battle for fitness to start at full-back, with Barry Dunnion lining out at wing-back having overcome injury and there was a first championship start since 2006 for Brendan Boyle, who has ended his own injury nightmare, with Michael Maguire making his Championship bow at number seven.

Two minutes in, the white flag at the River End was hoisted aloft as Aodhan Gallagher took a pass from midfield compatriot Michael McCann to fire the visitors in front.

Ciaran Bonner and Colm McFadden registered wides for the home side and Antrim doubled their advantage through Paddy Cunningham's sixth minute free.

Donegal's wide count continued to rise, before Conall Dunne was denied a goal on eight minutes. Goalkeeper Sean McGreevy was out well to deflect a low effort from the St Eunan's man, who was played in by Michael Murphy, but the custodian was forced to hobble off injured from the incident, replacement Peter Graham getting an earlier-than-anticipated introduction to the 2009 Ulster Championship.

Donegal's account was opened on eleven minutes through captain Rory Kavanagh, who fired over on the run after a long-ball into Murphy on the edge of the square was batted down.

Murphy, with a 13-metre free following a foul on McFadden by full-back Andy McClean that earned him a yellow card, levelled matters, only for Michael McCann to tap over a free after Neil McGee took him down.

Murphy added a second free to tie it up, but with Donegal looking somewhat disjointed Antrim tagged on two of their own. Tomas McCann stroked over a '45' rather coolly before Donegal made a total mess of things in defence and Cunningham picked up the pieces to score from out on the right.

Donegal brought Christy Toyne on for Barry Dunnion at the interval and a mere seventeen seconds of part two had elapsed when Ciaran

Bonner swept the hosts into a two-point lead.

Brendan Boyle fouled Tony Scullion, who galloped menacingly into Donegal territory from wing-back and Cunningham found the range with the resulting free, only for Murphy to make it a two-point game once again.

Donegal wouldn't score again until the 58th minute with McFadden tapping over a free. By then, Antrim unbelievably led by four.

Cunningham fired over a '45', Kevin Brady skipped inside a pair of Donegal backs to level it up and Tomas McCann needed no second invitation to put Antrim ahead on 48 minutes.

Donegal continued to chalk up the wides and MacCumhaill Park shuddered to its very core when McCann breezed up the left flank and in on Paul Durcan for a goal twelve minutes from the end. Although Durcan saved his initial effort, McCann wasn't to be denied with the rebound which he rolled home from close range, much to the delight of the now vociferous visiting hoards.

St Michael's pair McFadden, with two frees, and sub Christy Toyne brought Donegal back to within a point and although the Saffrons looked as if they lacked a little in belief to close out the game, they found the insurance points through sub defender Kevin O'Boyle who, from the shadows of the stand, clipped between the Town End's posts.

Although Rory Kavanagh pointed, Donegal couldn't save the game from the embers and it was Terry O'Neill again who plucked a long ball out of the sky in stoppage time.

Donegal had left themselves with too much to do and it was the Saffrons who were left dancing all the way to Clones. Dejected Donegal, after one of their poorest displays in recent memory, have to pick up the pieces and trek once more through the scenic route of the qualifiers in three weeks time.

A summer of promise in Ulster is over without fulfilment again and a big effort will be needed to lift the panel for the back door.

Match Stats

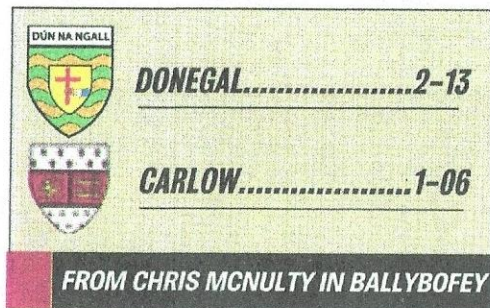
	Donegal/Antrim
Goals	0/1
Points	12/10
Wides	18/6
45s	2/3
Frees awarded	22/23
Frees scored	5/4
Short efforts	1/3
Yellow cards	1/2
Red cards	0/0
Attendance	12,544

The teams...

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Barry Dunnion, Kevin Cassidy, Michael Maguire; Neil Gallagher, Brendan Boyle; Ciaran Bonner (0-1), Michael Hegarty, Rory Kavanagh (0-3); Colm McFadden (0-2, 2f), Michael Murphy (0-5, 3f, 1 '45'), Conall Dunne. **SUBS:** Christy Toyne (0-1) for Dunnion (half-time); Brian Roper for Hegarty (47 mins); David Walsh for Dunne (51 mins); Frank McGlynn for Boyle (58 mins).

ANTRIM: Sean McGreevy; Colin Brady, Andy McClean, Dermot McCann; Tony Scullion, Justin Crozier, James Loughrey; Michael McCann (0-1, 1f), Aodhan Gallagher (0-1); Terry O'Neill, Kevin Brady (0-1), Niall McKeever; Paddy Cunningham (0-4, 3f), Sean Burke, Tomas McCann (1-2, 1 '45'). **SUBS:** Peter Graham for McGreevy (8 mins); Kevin O'Boyle (0-1) for D.McCann (44 mins); Kevin Niblock for Burke (49 mins); Ciaran Close for Brady (53 mins); Benny Hasson or McKeever (62 mins).

REFEREE: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh).



SECOND-HALF goals from St Eunan's pair Rory Kavanagh and Conall Dunne helped steer Donegal over the line after an unconvincing display against Carlow on Saturday evening in their Round One Qualifier.

Carlow lived with below-par Donegal for the duration of the first-half, but a Kavanagh goal on 36 minutes gave Donegal the kick they needed and Dunne fired in a second 16 minutes from time to help the home team to what was, in the end up, a comfortable ten-point win.

There were many of the negative traits still hanging around from the Antrim game with some 13 wides posted by John Joe Doherty's side on Saturday evening in yet another display of frustrating attacking play.

There was frustration with an over-fussy referee, as Sligo official Michael Duffy drew the ire of supporters and players alike with a whistle-happy display. In the first-half alone, he pulled up four Donegal handpasses and certainly would have won no admirers among the low attendance of around 2,000.

The win concluded what was a turbulent week for the Donegal camp on a high. Early last week, manager Doherty dropped players Ciaran Bonner and Neil Gallagher for a breach of discipline and his starting XV showed five changes from the side beaten by Antrim last month.

Leo McLoone made his Championship debut, while Frank McGlynn, Christy Toye, David Walsh and Stephen Griffin were back from the off against a Carlow team that had three alterations from their provincial defeat to Louth.

It was the visitors who made most of the early hay. Just ten minutes in, Ballybofey was rocked when Eric McCormack's free was batted down by

St Ledger into the path of JJ Smith, who picked out the far corner of the Donegal net.

Conall Dunne and Michael Murphy had early points for Donegal, while the Carlow account had been opened by Daniel St Ledger, who swung over from 30 metres on 6 minutes.

Eric McCormack converted a free to put Carlow three up and Donegal had to wait to the 20th minute to register again, Murphy curling over a free from the stand side on the 20-metre line.

Donegal were forced into an early change, an Achilles injury forcing Michael Maguire off on 15 minutes with Barry Monaghan introduced.

Carlow scored just once in the last 23 minutes of the first-half, a free from JJ Smith after Neil McGee fouled St Ledger, but Donegal came back to level the scores at the break. Murphy fired over a pair of frees and Stephen Griffin lifted the home crowd with a good point on the half-hour, firing over left-footed after a brilliant catch above his man.

A minute into the second-half, Donegal struck gold. Rory Kavanagh off-loaded to Griffin and the St Naul's man made good ground, before returning to his captain, who riffled past James Clarke.

Murphy, who was Donegal's top scorer with eight points, continued to chalk up the points, but the home side were showing an alarming tendency for wides yet again.

Still, three Murphy frees and a point from the impressive Christy Toye were answered only by a JJ Smith score before Donegal effectively sealed the win with a second goal with 54 minutes on the watch.

Brian Roper's effort at the posts dropped short and Conall Dunne was on hand to flick home from close range.

After Karl Lacey peculiarly kicked a back-pass to Paul Durcan out for a '45' Simon Rea stroked over the black spot, but the already downbeat visitors were further demoralised when they lost their captain Mark Carpenter to a second yellow card twelve minutes from the end.

Rea reduced the arrears with Carlow's final point on 58, but Donegal closed the game out with points from Murphy, Leo McLoone and sub

Dara Gallagher.

Ten points the margin, but still the story of the many wides is one that is hampering Donegal at the moment. Too often, players looked unwilling to take responsibility themselves and that confidence to take a pop must return, as must the accuracy from good scoring chances.

Against a better opposition on Saturday evening, Donegal would surely have been left rueing the wide count.

The curtain comes down on Carlow's 2009, while Donegal stumble over the first Qualifier hurdle and look to improve for their next challenge this weekend.

The new-look midfield of Cassidy and Toye did well, while there were good displays from Karl Lacey, Rory Kavanagh and Michael Murphy's eight points proved pivotal in the win.

MAN-OF-THE-MATCH

Christy Toye (Donegal)

Toye staves off competition from Rory Kavanagh and Michael Murphy to win the award after a fine overall performance in a new-look Donegal midfield. His constant probing was always a threat going forward.

TURNING POINT

The sides were level at half-time, but Donegal shot from the traps in the second-half and their well-worked opening goal from Rory Kavanagh inside the first minute after the re-start was a real body blow to Carlow.

TERRACE TALK

Donegal can't seem to find their shooting boots at the moment. After kicking 18 wides in Ulster against Antrim, Donegal followed that up with 13 on Saturday.

THE WHISTLER

Sligo official Michael Duffy will have won few fans on Saturday evening after a whistle-happy and fussy performance, though in fairness to the referee, he had little option with the second yellow card to Mark Carpenter.

Match Stats

	Donegal/Carlow
Goals	2/1
Points	12/6
Wides	13/6
45s	1/1
Frees awarded	31/30
Frees scored	7/4
Short efforts	3/0
Yellow cards	3/3
Red cards	0/1
Attendance	2,000

The teams...

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Barry Dunnion, Eamon McGee, Michael Maguire; Kevin Cassidy, Christy Toye (0-1); David Walsh, Leo McLoone (0-1), Rory Kavanagh (1-0); Conall Dunne (1-1), Michael Murphy (0-8, 7f), Stephen Griffin (0-1). **SUBS:** Barry Monaghan for Maguire (15 mins); Brian Roper for Walsh (half-time); Michael Doherty for Dunne (59 mins); Michael Hegarty for Griffin (67 mins); D Gallagher (0-1) for Murphy (69 mins).

CARLOW: James Clarke; Kieran Nolan, John Hayden, Shane Redmond; Sean Gannon, Barry English, Stephen Hunter; John Murphy, Willie Minchin; Danny Molloy, JJ Smith (1-2, 2f), Marc Carpenter; Eric McCormack (0-1, 1f), Daniel St Ledger (0-1), Simon Rea (0-2, 1f, 1'45'). **SUBS:** Brian Murphy for Molloy (half-time); Vinny Kavanagh for Hunter (45 mins); David Phelan for Minchin (45 mins); Johnny Kavanagh for McCormack (50 mins); Alan Curran for English (66 mins).

REFEREE: Michael Duffy (Sligo).

Another week, another win for mediocre Donegal

DONEGAL CLARE 0-13 1-07

BY CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY

ANOTHER week, another win, but another unconvincing display from Donegal, who continue to stumble on through the Qualifier route, following a mediocre win over Clare on Saturday night.

A good start that yielded three points in as many minutes after the throw-in suggested that perhaps the much maligned failings of the previous Championship games this summer had been eradicated.

Even when a shaky few moments in the first period kept a lid on that notion a similarly positive start to the second-half that saw Donegal race six points clear looked to provide the platform for a trouble-free conclusion.

Yet a scoreless period of around half-an-hour allowed Clare to come within a whisker of forcing extra-time. David Tubridy will be particularly frustrated after he was denied what looked like a good goal having being harshly penalised before he struck the back to the River End's net.

For Donegal the win came at a costly price as Christy Toye was forced out of the action twenty minutes from the end, the worrying sight of the impressive St Michael's man leaving on a stretcher added to Tir Chonaill's woes. Later, it was reported that a snapped Achillies could sideline Toye for some time - a hammer blow to club and county.

The second-half was as bad a half of Championship football as has been

seen in quite some time and rarely has Sean MacCumhaill Park seen a Donegal team looked as disjointed and sometimes uninterested as in the second-half on Saturday night.

The old saying that the first half was even and the second was even worse could certainly have been applied to Saturday's game.

The Donegal team showed two changes to that which had been named mid-week. Michael Maguire was unfit to start with Barry Monaghan taking the place of the Naomh Columba man, who it was confirmed has a broken bone in his foot, and in a second switch Colm McFadden made a return to the first XV, with Stephen Griffin dropping to the bench.

McFadden and Donegal started well. The St Michael's man swung over two early points, as the hosts started swiftly with Barry Dunning racing onto a neat pass from David Walsh to add another, with a possible goal chance passed up, as Christy Toye was on the run to the right.

While David Tubridy opened the Clare account with a fifth minute free, Donegal continued to press. Murphy pointed a free to restore the three-point lead before winning, and pointing another.

The collective feet seemed to be eased from the throttle then and Clare were afforded a path back into the contest. Enda Coughlan was fed by O'Shea for his first of the day, before the Banner were gifted a goal on 20 minutes.

Donegal keeper Paul Durcan was penalised for taking down Gary Brennan on the edge of the square

after the midfielder beat the Four Masters man to a high ball, just seconds after the number one was guilty of firing a stray free from the bye-line into the hands of Frank O'Dea.

Having survived that scare, he didn't get away with the second misdemeanour of the evening, Tubridy stepping up to stroke the penalty into the bottom corner. Durcan's nightmare evening was brought to an end when he was replaced by Termon's Michael Boyle for the second-half.

After the goal, Donegal did get back on track. Murphy took a diagonal ball from Leo McLoone to put Donegal ahead again. Any time Donegal took the direct route Clare looked in trouble, but for some reason or the other going direct wasn't the path traipsed too often.

Christy Toye sent a long ball for Murphy to bat down to McFadden, who needed not be invited a second time. Toye himself capped off a good first-half display by scoring two points in as many minutes, charging forward from the middle to split the sticks," the first after Walsh and Dunne did the spadework; the second having played a one-two with McFadden out the right.

Tubridy kept Clare in it with a free in stoppage time, but at 0-9 to 1-3 ahead at the break Donegal will have been fancied to press on.

McFadden, Murphy and Leo McLoone (whose blistering shot went over via a deflection off the top of the crossbar) did just that in the opening five minutes of the second-half and the Clare challenge looked like it was wilting fast. Those points

put Donegal six ahead.

However, the home side wouldn't score again until the stopwatch showed some 72 minutes on its face - a full 32 minutes, or 25 if the stoppage for Toye's injury is subtracted.

The fact that the scoreboard wasn't troubled for such a lengthy spell will be a massive concern for the Donegal management, who watched Clare chip away at the lead with three points.

Tubridy hit a free on 43, but the Banner shooting boots weren't present either. It was the 67th minute before they registered again, through Enda Coughlan's second of the game and another from Pdraig O'Dwyer, after a cleverly taken quick-free, set up an interesting finish.

Over six minutes of added time was played following the injury to Toye, but all that was chalked up in that period were two frees, one by Murphy and the other from Tubridy.

The Clare forward ended with 1-4 to his name and can feel aggrieved not to have sent the game to an extra period.

He was blown up by referee Martin Higgins for lifting off the ground, but most people in the ground seemed to disagree with the decision. Tubridy had rattled the net, sending a shot off the inside of the post to the River End net, for a goal that could have kept patrons on for a while longer.

Donegal might well have been sprung into action had it stood, but the glaring fact is that a vast improvement is needed if the summer is to be prolonged. A win is a win, as they say, but when the bigger fish of

the latter rounds come to be fried, the passion, heart and hunger must return to the table and the basic errors be put to the bin.

David Tubridy's scores kept Clare in the mix, while the Banner also had good displays from Gary Brennan and David Russell. Rory Kavanagh was the pick of Donegal's lot, with Karl Lacey, Christy Toye until his injury, Eamon McGee and Colm McFadden having their moments.


Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Barry Dunning (0-1), Barry Monaghan, Eamon McGee; Christy Toye (0-2), Kevin Cassidy; Rory Kavanagh, Leo McLoone (0-1), David Walsh; Conall Dunne, Michael Murphy (0-5, 4f), Colm McFadden (0-4). **SUBS:** Michael Boyle for Durcan (half-time); Brian Roper for Toye (48 mins); Brenda Boyle for Monaghan (57 mins); Dara Gallagher for Walsh (60 mins); Michael Hegarty for McLoone (72 mins).

Clare: Dermot O'Brien; Laurence Healy, Conor Whelan, Martin McMahon; Gordan Kelly, Kevin Dilleen, Graham Kelly; Ger Quinlan, Gary Brennan; Enda Coughlan (0-2), David Russell, Seán Collins; Michael O'Shea, Frank O'Dea, David Tubridy (1-4, 1pen, 4f). **SUBS:** Peter O'Dwyer (0-1) for O'Dea (26 mins); Cathal O'Connor for O'Shea (half-time); Pdraig McMahon for Collins (52 mins); Liam Markham for Graham Kelly (62 mins).

Referee: Martin Higgins (Fermanagh).

GAA - All Ireland Football Championship, Round 3 Qualifier

COUNTY'S PRIDE GETS A BOOST



DONEGAL.....2-13

DERRY.....0-18

after extra time, 1-11 to 0-14 after normal time

FROM CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY

DONEGAL emerged from the pressure cooker that was Saturday evening's pulsating all-Ulster Qualifier with Derry with a renewed pride and renewed hope after John Joe Doherty's men saw off the Oak Leaf men in a thriller.

Derry forced extra time after staging a commendable second-half comeback, but Donegal gave the performance their fans so desperately craved and it was the green and gold flags that floated proudly at the conclusion of 70 ferocious minutes.

Sean MacCumhaill Park's impressive floodlights were on for the first time in an intercounty match when Chrissy McKaigue salvaged the game from the burning embers in the dying seconds. Derry then led for the first time 20 seconds into extra time, only for Kevin Cassidy to strike a three-pointer almost instantly at the other end.

Colm McFadden had netted the first Donegal goal on 18 minutes and that helped an invigorated Donegal into a three-point interval lead.

Donegal, minus Michael Maguire and Christy Toye to injury, showed three changes from the team that stumbled past Clare a week earlier at the same venue. Michael Boyle came in for Paul Durcan in goals, Brendan Boyle replaced David Walsh while Brian Roper was handed the number eleven shirt in a recall to the starting fifteen for a first Championship start of the year for the veteran Ballyshannon man.

Written off as no-hopers after three below-par showings against Antrim, Carlow and Clare, Donegal entered Saturday evening's game as rank underdogs against a Derry side brimming in confidence from their impressive win over Monaghan seven days previously.

But, Donegal stood up to the task and put it up to Damian Cassidy's charges right from the off. The tenacity, intensity and confidence that had been lacking in the previous games, returned in style on Saturday.

Karl Lacey was like a sticking plaster on Paddy Bradley right up to the Glenullin man's enforced departure midway through the second-half; Conall Dunne was outstanding for the 90 minutes, mopping up a mountain of breaking ball and going through a lot of hard graft; Rory Kavanagh played a real captain's role; Kevin Cassidy was back to his old self, giving Donegal a real drive; and the inside line of Colm McFadden and Michael Murphy was too hot to handle.

The early stages were categorised mainly by a glut of bad wides, each team registering five in the opening quarter, where Derry remained scoreless and Donegal led through an early Michael Murphy point.

The visitors had to wait to the 16th minute to get off the mark, James Kielt firing over after McKaigue dispossessed Brian Roper, and shortly after Mark Lynch stroked over the black spot from 30 metres and Derry were in front.

Within a minute, the pendulum swung 'Tír Chonaill's' way. Brendan Boyle's arrowed delivery found Murphy, the Glenswilly teenager majestically rose and in mid-air delicately took control of the ball before off-loading to McFadden. The St Michael's man completed the move in style, with a low finish past Barry Gillis.

Tails now up, Donegal had an immediate chance to move three up, but Conall Dunne was knocked off his balance as the finger was

placed on the trigger and Derry could breathe again. Matters were squared up as Lynch fired over his second and Kielt fisted over from close range with a possible goal chance after he was released by Eoin Bradley.

But Donegal's response was excellent. McFadden magnificently clipped over with the outside of the left boot and Barry Monaghan, who had a good hour and a half at centre-back galloped up to restore a two-point advantage.

Paddy Bradley had been getting little freedom from Lacey's shackles all evening and he was restricted to one point, that from a free, in the first-half. Donegal finished the half well and McFadden hit back for them with the final say of the half falling the way of the ever-green Roper, who fired over following a good break from defence by Frank McGlynn and put Donegal into a 1-5 to 0-5 half-time lead.

Murphy pulled a free wide early in the second-half with a chance to open up a four-point lead, but after Bradley scored only his second point, a free after McGlynn was penalised for a foul on his brother Eoin, Murphy won a free off the by-now already tormented Sean Marly Loekhart and struck the resulting kick over the bar. It was the first of three Donegal points in a row. Cassidy took a quick free a minute later, feeding the hungry Murphy, who spun away from a dizzy Loekhart to stretch the lead.

Conall Dunne then smashed the crossbar with a goal chance for the hosts, but a patient move after that contained over a dozen passes concluded with Cassidy having a successful pop at the posts to move Donegal five ahead on 42 minutes.

Sub Gavin McShane stemmed the flow, but Colm McFadden kept an attack alive when he somehow prevented Leo McLoone's shot from going wide. From the byeline, McFadden held off his man and cleverly pointed over his shoulder.

Derry's deck was weakened with the loss of Bradley, who manager Cassidy reported later was seeing double after taking a bang on the head, but frees from Barry McGoldrick and Kielt kept them in touch.

McFadden and McGoldrick traded frees and there was just the goal between them heading into the final ten minutes, where Derry pressed on. Two fantastic scores by Eoin Bradley, one a '45' and the other a massive effort from play, brought Derry back to within a single score.

And while a Murphy free calmed Donegal's nerves, Chrissy McKaigue forced extra time with a wonder score with practically the last kick of normal time after Mark Lynch added a point seconds earlier.

Weary looking now, Donegal needed an inspiration from somewhere. And despite being rocked by an Eoin Bradley point in 20 seconds of the start of extra time, it came in the form of Kevin Cassidy.

A minute later, the Gaith Dobhair man ghosted in to get on the end of a Murphy knock-down from Kavanagh's free, and he clinically tucked the ball home, to raise the cheers from the home fans in the 11,589 attendance.

Donegal dominated extra time, but a further array of wayward shooting that took their tally of wides to 17 overall, looked like it would haunt them when Derry came back to within a point thanks to Kielt frees. Indeed Enda Lynn had a late chance to win it, but he screwed wide and Michael Boyle's kickout was met by delirium in the terraces, as Donegal fans celebrated at their old rivals' expense.

It was the big game Donegal had cried out for since exiting Ulster and they responded to the challenge magnificently - the big players stood up and at last there was a return of the passion and hunger that appeared to be non-existent in previous encounters. Back on track for now at least, the task is to build momentum at whatever destination fate decrees in Round Four.

Lacey key as Derry hit by Donegal backlash

Donegal 2-13 Derry 0-18

July 18 2009

By Cliona Foley

KICK even the mildest-mannered man often enough and he'll come out snarling.

Fed up with being slagged off and written off, Donegal's footballers finally came out with their fists up and Derry were the shocked one-point victims of their backlash in this nail-biting clash in Ballybofey on Saturday night.

Donegal have a reputation for blowing hot at least once every summer, so their delighted fans, among the 11,589 crowd, left wondering if this will be their 'one big game' of 2009.

They let a five-point first-half lead -- thanks to an early Colm McFadden goal -- slip and had a second goal -- from Kevin Cassidy, just 70 seconds into extra-time -- to thank for eventually crawling over the line.

Derry substitute Enda Lynn wasted a great chance in the dying seconds to take them to a replay, but the better side won.

Whether or not Donegal allay their critics' remaining doubts is entirely in their own hands now in their unexpected last-12 place, but kicking a whopping 17 wides -- eight of them, almost fatally, in the 20 minutes of extra-time -- did not inspire total confidence.

But no one could question their effort and bottle in this gutsy display, and from players and manager alike, the recurring theme was of pride restored to their badly wounded psyche.

A player meeting a week earlier, after they had only limped past a second consecutive Division 4 side (Clare), was a key factor in their redemption.

Finished

"People tend to forget that we were up there, maybe (in the country's) top six, top eight and it really, really hurt to have people say that this Donegal team were finished," Eamonn McGee said.

"Our own fans really hurt us, they gave us a lot of stick. We sat down and had a good honest talk and I think a lot of the boys had to shoulder a bit of leadership."

Chief among those leaders was Karl Lacey, who held Paddy Bradley scoreless for 32 minutes and to just two frees before he went off injured. Lacey then switched his attentions, with equally devastating effect, to his brother Eoin, who only scored 0-3 (1 '45).

Manager John Joe Doherty had been criticised for starting 2006 All Star Lacey this summer, considering he missed the entire league campaign travelling Down Under.

But, as McGee said afterwards: "I'd gladly reimburse whoever paid his (airline) ticket! Even Patrick (Bradley) did not get a sniff off Karl, he was just immense."

The loss of Christy Toyne to a ruptured Achilles a week earlier also spurred them on. "We did it for Christy as well, he is suffering big time," McGee said.

Toyne's loss, coupled with Neil Gallagher's absence (dropped for disciplinary reasons), was expected to leave Donegal bereft at midfield but they proved anything but, and for that Doherty can take plenty of credit.

Brendan Boyle was a late replacement for David Walsh before throw-in and started in the middle of the park. Like Conal Dunne, he worked tirelessly throughout and won a huge amount of ball.

Doherty also replaced goalkeeper Paul Durcan with Michael Boyle at the eleventh hour, and a team that had conceded three goals en route conceded none to a Derry side who had previously scored four.

Donegal's two goals -- brilliant teenage full-forward Michael Murphy (19) teed up McFadden for the first and Cassidy drifted beautifully in behind the defence for the second off a great pass from Rory Kavanagh -- were vital as they never allowed Derry build from the back.

Despite rediscovering their form against Monaghan, Derry looked extremely nervy initially, kicking five wides in the opening 11 minutes before James Kieft and Mark Lynch (their best forward) put them a point clear.

Donegal's shooting was equally jittery -- four wides in the opening 10 minutes -- but McFadden's goal settled them and though it was level after 26 minutes, they then led the whole way to the 71st minute when a spectacular equaliser by Chrissy McKaigue earned extra-time.

Derry will rue one key miss. After 26 minutes, Lynch and Eoin Bradley combined to put Kieft through with just the 'keeper to beat, but he opted to take a point. A goal at that stage would have been vital because Neil McGee was struggling to contain Eoin Bradley.

The subsequent switch of his brother Eamonn to mark him tempered Eoin Bradley's influence and, with Lacey tying up Paddy Bradley and Barry Dunnion getting to grips with Lynch, Derry never got another sniff of a goal.

They trailed 0-5 to 1-5 at half-time and, ironically, only when they lost Paddy Bradley to a head injury after 45 minutes did they seem to find their rhythm and some space. When Lacey conceded a free early in extra-time and Kieft slotted it, Derry's tails went up, only to be hit immediately with Cassidy's goal.

When they changed ends a third time Donegal led by two (2-12 to 0-16) thanks to David Walsh, but they really should have bolted the door by then.

McFadden kicked three wides (one free) and dropped another chance short in the first period of extra-time and was guilty again in the final 10 minutes when Donegal added another horrendous five misses.

Forgiving

But relieved boss Doherty was, understandably, in a forgiving mood.

"In fairness to Colm, he was showing for the ball and there is a lot to be said for the man that hits a wide and is putting his hand up for the next ball," he said. "I'd have preferred if we hit them over the bar but Donegal always do things the hard way!"

Scorers -- Donegal: C McFadden 1-4 (1f), M Murphy 0-5, K Cassidy 1-1, B Monaghan, B Roper, D Walsh 0-1 each. Derry: J Kielt 0-5 (3f), M Lynch, E Bradley (1 '45) 0-3 each, P Bradley, B McGoldrick (2f) 0-2 each, G O'Kane, C McKaigue, G McShane 0-1 each.

Donegal -- M Boyle 8; F McGlynn 4, N McGee 5, K Lacey 9; B Dunnion 7, B Monaghan 7, E McGee 8; K Cassidy 8, B Boyle 9; L McLoone 5, C Dunne 8, R Kavanagh 8; B Roper 6, M Murphy 8, C McFadden 8. Subs: D Walsh 7 for McLoone (59), M Hegarty 6 for Roper (64), J Gallagher 7 for N McGee (73).

Derry -- B Gillis 7; G O'Kane 7, K McCloy 5, SM Lockhart 8; C McKaigue 6, B McGoldrick 6, S L McGoldrick 6; Patsy Bradley 6, J Diver 6; B Mullan 5, J Kielt 7, M Lynch 8; E Bradley 8, F Doherty 6, P Bradley 6. Subs: B Og McAlary 7 for McCloy (34), B McGuigan 6 for Mullan (44), G McShane 6 for Diver (44), E Lynn 7 for Paddy Bradley (inj, 45), S Bradley for McShane (79).

REF -- D Coldrick (Meath).

GAA - All Ireland Football Championship, Round 3 Qualifier

BY HARRY WALSH WITH THE FANS AT SEAN MACCUMHAILL PARK

Now that's what I call football

Result was no surprise - Damian Cassidy

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Barry Dunnion, Barry Monaghan (0-1), Eamon McGee; Brendan Boyle, Kevin Cassidy (1-1); Rory Kavanagh, Brian Roper (0-1), Leo McLoone; Conall Dunne, Michael Murphy (0-5, 2f), Colm McFadden (1-4, 1f). Subs: David Walsh (0-1) for McLoone (59 mins); Michael Hegarty for Roper (63 mins); Johnny Gallagher for N McGee (73 mins).

Derry: Barry Gillis; Chrissy McKaigue (0-1), Kevin McCloy, Sean Marty Lockart; Gerard O'Kane (0-1), Barry McGoldrick (0-2, 2f), Sean Leo McGoldrick; Fergal Doherty, Patsy Bradley; Joe Diver, James Kieft (0-5, 3f), Brian Mullan; Eoin Bradley (0-3, 1 '45'), Paddy Bradley (0-2, 2f), Mark Lynch (0-3). Subs: Brian Og McAlary for McCloy (34 mins); Gavin McShane (0-1) for Diver (43 mins); Brian McGuigan for Mullan (43 mins); Enda Lynn for Paddy Bradley (50 mins); Seamus Bradley for McShane (79 mins).

Referee: David Coldrick (Meath)

Match Stats

	Donegal/Derry
Goals	2/0
Points	13/18
Wides	17/12
45s	0/2
Frees awarded	25/31
Frees scored	3/7
Short efforts	5/1
Yellow cards	0/1
Red cards	0/0
Attendance	11,589

MAN OF THE MATCH

Donegal had real leaders all over the park and selecting a Man of the Match was difficult. Conall Dunne was tireless in his endeavour, as were Rory Kavanagh and Kevin Cassidy, while Barry Dunnion and Brendan Boyle were in top form. Eamon McGee had a faultless evening when he showed his true class, Michael Murphy and Colm McFadden had the Derry defence seeing stars for long periods, but for a quite stunning defensive display the award is marginally pipped by Karl Lacey.

TURNING POINT

Donegal looked to be gone when Eoin Bradley put Derry ahead in extra time. That point meant six of the last seven points were to Derry. But Kevin Cassidy popped up with the goal that put the cat among the pigeons and it was ultimately the Gaoth Dobhair man's strike that put Donegal through.

TERRACE TALK

Donegal had been written off and berated as not having a chance against Derry after three lacklustre displays. But Donegal football has pride restored once more after a fine 90 minutes of tenacious determination. If the same Tír Chonaill emerges next weekend, who knows what might be in wait?

THE WHISTLER

Moath man David Coldrick was charged with keeping the peace in the red hot cauldron of MacCumhail Park, but he handled the game well and he had just one yellow card over the 90 minutes.

BY CHRIS MCNULTY

DERRY manager Damian Cassidy wasn't at all surprised that his side were the victims of a resurgent Donegal on Saturday night.

The downbeat Derry man found the defeat hard to take and while he admitted that he felt his side didn't deserve to lose the game, he paid tribute to a Donegal performance that he knew was coming.

"There is no surprise in this," Cassidy told the media in the wake of his team's defeat that ends his first term in charge of the Oak Leaf men on a disappointing note.

"We knew that we were coming up to play a tough game against Donegal and we expected a tough game from them.

"You often find that a team whose backs are to the wall and are get a lot of criticism such as Donegal, they come out and respond whenever they feel that there is nobody really giving them the support that they need for the time, effort and work they are putting in.

"That performance of Donegal's, particularly the first-half which set the tone for them, was on the back of that type of criticism they were getting. We were fully aware that response was coming."

Cassidy didn't need to think twice about where his side had lost the game.

He said: "We lost it in the first twenty minutes of the first half. We lost the initiative at that stage

POST MATCH REACTION

and we were always playing catch-up after that. "We lacked intensity in comparison to Donegal and that subsequently set the tone for the rest of the game.

"We were chasing the score that they were getting. Our players responded magnificently in the second-half when they went five down to pull it back, so the spirit is clearly there for all to see. What we have to do in a period of reflection is see the areas we have to improve in for next season.

"We got level, but we could never get ourselves in front. The goal at the start of extra time was a big factor as we were chasing the game again but good luck to Donegal.

"Their backs were against the wall and they were getting stick in the county but they responded really well to it."

One big factor in the game was the job done by Karl Lacey on Derry's talismanic Paddy Bradley. On the back of a 2-08 haul against Monaghan in Clones a week earlier, Bradley's threat was effectively nullified by the determined Lacey, who kept Bradley to a pair of frees.

Cassidy said: "Karl Lacey deserves credit for the job he did, but while we lost Paddy in the middle of the second-half, it spurred our team into action and we played with greater intensity. We had probably just left ourselves with too much work."

All-Ireland Senior Football Championship, round four

Donegal dig deep to reach quarter-final

Donegal 0-14
Galway 0-13

Tom Comack reports
Photos by Thomas Gallagher

Donegal are still in the All-Ireland Championship race after another heart stopping and at times pulsating victory over Galway in Markievicz Park, Sligo on Saturday evening.

While the football may not have reached the dizzy heights of the previous Saturday's extra-time victory over Derry, this encounter was laced with passages of good play and a number of outstanding individual performances.

But most of all, this victory was honed out of hard work and commitment and a never-say-die attitude when the defeated Connacht finalists threatened to pull away in the second half.

Colm McFadden and Michael Murphy did the most of the damage up front scoring 11 of their side's total while Conall Dunne ran himself into the ground. Brian Roper, too, at times showed there is no compensation for experience while Rory Kavanagh worked all over the park and kicked a crucial point as well as cracking one off the crossbar.

Kevin Cassidy is once again back to the Cassidy of old and his power and strength in the middle of the field proved crucial when the going got tough.

But the real heroes of this victory were in defence where Karl Lacey, Barry Dunnion and Barry Monaghan were in exceptional form, with

Lacey restricting Galway dangerman Michael Meehan to two points from play and making a number of vital interceptions and forcing one or two critical turnarounds.

Donegal opened well with three points inside seven minutes, all frees two from Michael Murphy and one from Colm McFadden.

Murphy, in particular, had the appearance in the early stages of a man that was going to beat Galway on his own as he gave Finian Hanley a torrid time. All three opening points came from fouls on Murphy inside seven minutes.

Sean Armstrong and Paul Conroy did pull two back for Galway as the game ebbed and flowed. But with Murphy continuing to torment Leo

McLoone and Murphy (free) stretched the Donegal lead back out to three, 0-5 to 0-3, after 20 minutes.

As the game wore on Galway got on top around midfield and started winning the lion's share of possession. Enjoying a greater share of possession Michael Meehan, Sean Armstrong, Matthew Clancy and Paul Conroy began to ask questions of the Donegal rearguard.

Meehan posted two frees in this period to make it a one point game. But Murphy and McFadden punished before Clancy and Paul Conroy tied it up at 0-7 each at the interval.

Galway opened at breakneck pace at the start of the second half with Gareth Bradshaw and Padraic Joyce scoring. In between McFadden scored for Donegal.

And while Galway pressed, Donegal defended like demons with Karl Lacey and Barry Monaghan getting back to take a Clancy shot off the line.

McFadden tied it up again at 0-9 each on 43 minutes before Galway pulled away again to go two up for the first time in the game courtesy of Kieran Fitzgerald and Armstrong

Galway were dictating at this stage and had all the appearance of a team that had shaken off the heartbreak of losing the Connacht final to Mayo six days earlier.

But Donegal hung in and took the Tribesmen's best shots with Colm McFadden and Murphy pulling out two big points to draw level.

And when the game was in the fire, it was Donegal's heart and commitments that saw them forge two ahead with Rory Kavanagh and David Walsh landing two big scores.

Leading 0-13 to 0-11 with 12 minutes remaining it was backs-to-the-wall for the men in green and gold. Meehan made it a one point game again with ten remaining. But heroics in defence from Lacey, Barry Dunnion and Barry Monaghan Donegal wore down the clock.

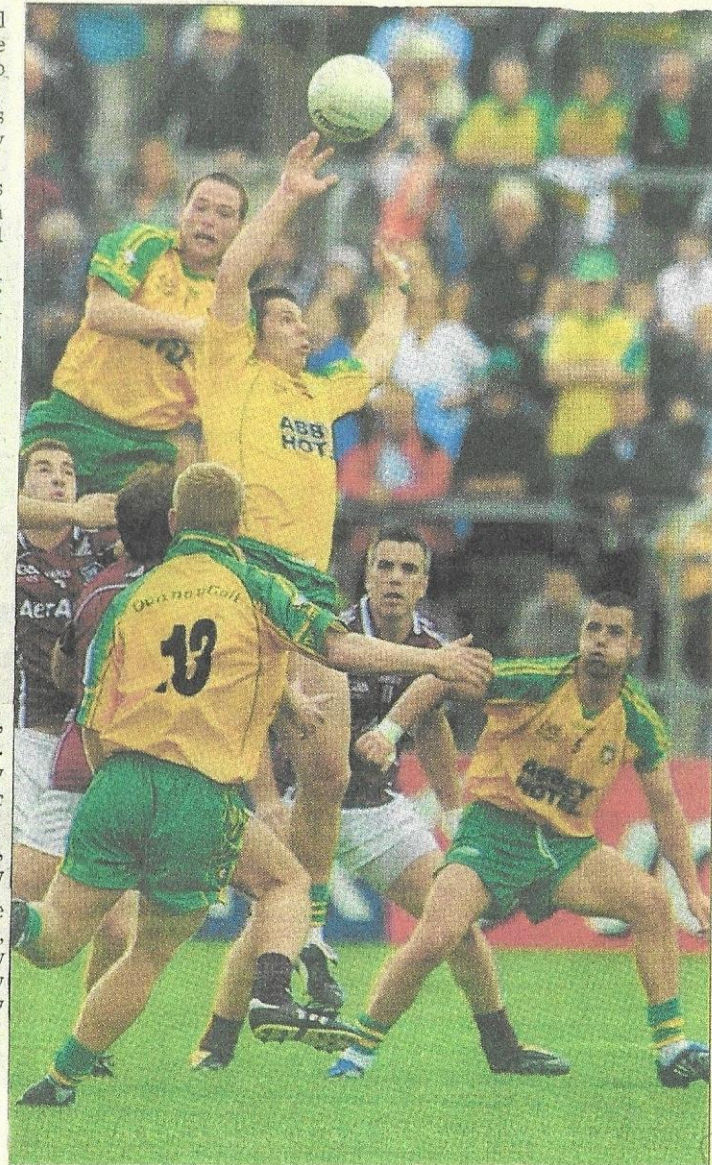
Galway lost centre back, Diarmaid Blake, to a second yellow card just before McFadden from a free gave his side a little breathing space. Meehan did keep the pot boiling as he clipped over his fourth three minutes from the end but in those spine tingling closing second Donegal clung on for a place in the last eight in the country.

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Barry Dunnion, Barry Monaghan, Eamonn McGee; Brendan Boyle, Kevin Cassidy; Rory Kavanagh (0-1), Brian

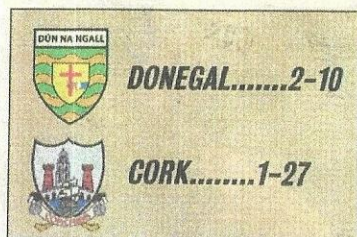
Roper, Leo McLoone (0-1); Conall Dunne, Michael Murphy (0-5,5f), Colm McFadden (0-6,4f). Subs: David Walsh (0-1) for L. McLoone; Johnny Gallagher for F. McGlynn; Adrian Hanlon for Roper; Michael Hegarty for C. Dunne.

Galway: Adrian Faherty; Kieran Fitzgerald (0-1), Finian Hanley, Damien Burke; Gareth Bradshaw (0-1), Diarmaid Blake, Declan Meehan; Joe Bergin, Niall Coleman; Sean Armstrong (0-2), Padraic Joyce (0-1), Paul Conroy (0-2); Matthew Clancy (0-2), Michael Meehan (0-4,2f), Nicky Joyce. Subs: Cormac Bane for P. Conroy; Barry Cullinane for N. Joyce.

Referee: Rory Hickey (Clare)



Donegal's march halted



FROM CHRIS MCNULTY AT CROKE PARK
PHOTOS BY MICHAEL O'DONNELL

DONEGAL'S All Ireland dream didn't just end at Croke Park yesterday - it was absolutely crushed by explosive Cork, who showed no mercy with a rampant display and a landslide fourteen-point win over John Joe Doherty's charges.

The Munster Champions were simply too powerful in too many sectors for Donegal, who had the appearance of a team that was dead on their feet after heavy excursions through the four rounds of the qualifiers.

Cork's power and physicality gave them a huge advantage and from early on it was clear that Donegal had little in the way of answers. Just three times in the first-half Donegal split the Hill 16 posts, while Cork added 13 at the other end.

On the wide open spaces of the unforgiving Croke Park, Conor Counihan's team surged on in part two and despite second-half goals by Rory Kavanagh and Stephen Griffin, Donegal had too much of a mountain to climb and the three-pointers merely served to keep the margin down.

Cork finished with a grand total of thirty points yesterday, with a staggering 1-24 of their tally coming from play (three frees by Donnacha O'Connor their only points from the placed ball).

The fact that the Cork half-back line scored almost as many points as the Donegal full-forward line was also a telling factor in the Rebel's dominance of the encounter. John Miskella scampered up for four impressive scores and their captain Graham Canty added one. By contrast, young Michael Murphy's six points were all the Donegal inside line had to offer.

Donegal fans had flocked to the capital in their thousands and many expressed the hope and belief that there could be another big game in this team that had turned the season on its head with two fine wins over Derry and Galway.

Even those who thought Cork might have too much in the tank couldn't have predicted the gap that separated them by the time Maurice Deegan's whistle signalled the end of Donegal's summer.

It was a painful journey home for Donegal fans, who had dared to dream of a last four spot in the last week.

The injured Michael Maguire and Christy Toyne will have been gutted and with their presence Donegal might have had a bit more in them and with a good seed sewn in the discipline stakes, John Joe Doherty will be generally happy with his lot over the previous few weeks, thought the manner of his team's exit from the race for Sam yesterday will trouble the Glen man for some time.

Anthony Lynch, as expected, was unable to start and Kieran O'Connor came in for the corner back in one of two changes made by Counihan - in attack, James Masters made way for Colm O'Neill.

Michael Murphy got Donegal up and running with an early free, but by the time Brian Roper chalked up a second, Cork had hit four of their own - O'Connor with two frees and Miskella with two from play doing the damage.

O'Neill also squandered a goal chance inside that opening quarter when he got on the end of a move involving Canty and Paul Kerrigan, but O'Neill drove wide of the far post.

On 16 minutes, half of Croke Park thought that Cork had rattled the Donegal net, O'Neill feeding Daniel Goulding, but his effort ended up in the side-netting and Donegal could breathe again.

Not for long. Cork added seven points in the next 13 minutes to move into a real commanding position. Canty got the procession up and running and Kelly hit two in a minute before Kerrigan opened up a six-point lead for the southerners.

It was getting all too easy for Cork and O'Neill strode in for two more before Kerrigan forced a way past Dunnington to make it 0-11 to 0-2 on the half-hour.

A palmed effort by Murphy was Donegal's only reply, while Cork pressed on with Pearse O'Neill and Patrick Kelly making sure the scoreboard told a grim tale to Tir Chonaill folk at the interval.

It was merely a prelude for what was to come though. Pearse O'Neill added his second to move Cork eleven clear and despite Murphy and Eamon McGee getting on the mark for Donegal, Cork responded each time.

O'Connor registered another free, but worse was to follow McGee's point on 40 minutes. Patrick Kelly's clever through-ball sent Kerrigan on his merry way and he was as calm as could be in picking his spot beyond Michael Boyle.

O'Connor shot wide when he should have done better, but he at-

oned for his miss with a point soon after.

As the game entered its final quarter, Cork were 14 ahead. Donegal reduced that by three when Murphy's craft saw him find Rory Kavanagh in space and the Tir Chonaill captain drilled past Alan Quirke to raise the decible level from the despondent hoards of green and gold followers.

Cork's answer was again a staggeringly impressive one. They hit five on the spin, with Kerrigan (2), Goulding (2) and sub Paudie Kissane raising the flags.

Murphy, Barry Monaghan and Adrian Hanlon - with an impressive first point for the Dungloe man at Headquarters - brought it down to fifteen with just four minutes to go.

Stephen Griffin finished Donegal's second goal well after taking another pass from Murphy, but Cork didn't lay off the gas and it was Paudie Kissane who had the final say - the kiss of death placed when he squared up his angles to knock over in stoppage time.

Cork move on to what should be a pulsating semi final with Tyrone while it's back to an Autumn of club football for Donegal.

Donegal: Michael Boyle; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Barry Dunnington, Barry Monaghan (0-1), Eamon McGee (0-1); Brendan Boyle, Kevin Cassidy; Rory Kavanagh (1-0), Brian Roper (0-1), Leo McLoone; Conall Dunne, Michael Murphy (0-6, 3f), Colm McFadden. SUBS: David Walsh for McLoone (half-time); Stephen Griffin (1-0) for Roper (half-time); Dara Gallagher for B.Boyle (48 mins); Adrian Hanlon (0-1) for Dunne (51 mins); Eoin Waide for E.McGee (57 mins).

Cork: Alan Quirke; Ray Carey, Michael Shields, Kieran O'Connor; Noel O'Leary, Graham Canty (0-1), John Miskella (0-4); Alan O'Connor, Nicholas Murphy; Paul Kerrigan (1-5), Pearse O'Neill (0-2), Paddy Kelly (0-2); Daniel Goulding (0-3), Colm O'Neill (0-2), Donnacha O'Connor (0-3, 3f). SUBS: Fintan Gould (0-2) for O'Connor (45 mins); Fiachra Lynch (0-1) for O'Neill (51 mins); Michael Cussen for Murphy (53 mins); Paudie Kissane (0-2) for Miskella (57 mins); John Hayes for Kerrigan (61 mins).

Referee: Maurice Deegan (Laois)

Match Stats

	Donegal/Cork
Goals	2/1
Points	10/27
Wides	5/11
45s	1/1
Frees awarded	16/13
Frees scored	3/3
Short efforts	0/2
Yellow cards	1/0
Red cards	0/0

MAN OF THE MATCH

Neil McGee and Karl Lacey did good marking jobs yesterday, while Kevin Cassidy in spells showed up well and Michael Murphy, who scored six points, didn't shirk responsibility. But, the masters were all attired in red. John Miskella rose their stock from wing-back with four fine points, Nicholas Murphy and Alan O'Connor dominated centre-field, but with 1-5 to his name and a powerful display to which Donegal had no counter-action, Paul Kerrigan gets the nod.

THE WHISTLER

Such was Cork's dominance, Maurice Deegan was never going to influence the contest to any great degree and was largely an anonymous figure.

Allianz National Football League Division 1A

Rude awakening for Donegal in the Kingdom

Report: Tom Comack
Photos: Michael O'Donnell

Kerry 2-13
Donegal 0-11

Donegal came crashing back to earth in Austin Stack Park, Tralee, on Sunday afternoon with their defeat by Kerry, in their opening game of the Allianz National Football League.

Kerry won by eight points, but in truth their margin of victory could have been much greater. The 2008 All-Ireland finalists most definitely took the foot off the pedal in the second half. In reality this game was over after six minutes. By that time Kerry with David Moran, lord and master in the middle of the field and Declan Sullivan, Paul Galvin, Colm 'the Gooch' Copper and Tommy Walsh rampant up front, Kerry were 2-6 to 0-1 up.

The Gooch and Walsh bagged the goals while Galvin (2), Moran (2) and Cooper hit the points. Stephen Griffin was the sole Donegal marksman in this period.

Donegal did post two late points towards the end of the half but Kerry were home and hosed at the break as they led 2-8 to 0-3.

With the home team easing off Donegal

- with the introduction of Owen Waide, Neil McGee and Brian Roper - did improve in the second period.

Roper kicked three points with Michael Doherty, David Walsh and Griffin also getting in on the act as the visitors won the second half 0-8 to 0-5.

But that will be of little consolation to John Joe Doherty and his backroom team of Tommy Ryan, Tony Boyle and Michael McGeehin after seeing their side wiped out in most sectors by the superior Kerry men.

Despite the successful Dr. McKenna Cup run, Doherty and his team must have flown south on Sunday morning with a degree of trepidation given that Jack O'Connor had named a very strong side. In all Kerry fielded 12 of the team that featured against Tyrone in last September's All-Ireland final.

While Stephen Griffin got Donegal off the mark first with a point inside a minute, the first half and in particular the opening quarter hour belonged to Kerry.

The alarm bells were ringing as early as the fourth minute when the Gooch rose highest to flick a David Moran centre, carried in the stiff breeze, to the net with Paul Durcan rooted to the spot.

It got worse three minutes later when seconds after Galvin had opened his account Tommy Walsh bagged home the

second goal. This time the big full-forward tapped to an empty net to polish off a sweeping four man move that began with Seamus Scanlon in his own half.

With Donegal on the rack, Cooper, Moran and Galvin piled on the misery to see their side cruise into a 2-6 to 0-1 lead with just 16 minutes having elapsed on the clock. A long and painful 50 or so minutes still remaining for Rory Kavanagh and Co. and the small band of loyal Donegal supporters that made the long trek.

Amazingly, Kerry only scored twice for the remainder of the half through Cooper and Walsh while Griffin, Donegal's best forward until the introduction of Roper, hit two.

Griffin did get Donegal off the mark at the start of the second period but two flash points from Moran and Declan O'Sullivan inside seven minutes put an end to any hope of Donegal making a game of it.

Griffin and Barry Monaghan raised white flags on 44 and 45 minutes before Roper, who was making his record breaking 148th appearance, added a little bite to the Donegal attack.

Roper got his first on 47 minutes to cancel out another O'Sullivan special and he added his second on 58 minutes to make it a nine point game, 2-12 to 0-9.

He knocked over his third seven minutes from the end before Cooper and Griffin posted late points.

This was a reality check for Donegal and a stark reminder to John Joe Doherty and Donegal followers on the task the new management have taken on if the are to restore the county to the top flight.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Raymond Sweeney, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne, Barry Monaghan (0-1), Eamonn McGee; Neil Gallagher, Brendan Boyle; Ciaran Bonner, Conall Dunne, Rory Kavanagh; Kevin McMenamin, Stephen Griffin (0-4,2F), David Walsh (0-1). Subs: Michael Doherty (0-2,f) for B. Boyle; Neil McGee for C. Byrne; Owen Waide for E. McGee; (both half-time) Brian Roper (0-3) for C. Dunne; Declan Walsh for F. McGlynn; Leon Thompson for K. McGlynn.

Kerry: Michael Reidy; Ger Reidy; Padraig Reidy, Aidan O'Mahony, Killian Young; Tommy Griffin, Marc O'Se, Aidan O'Shea; Seamus Scanlon, David Moran (0-3f); Paul Galvin (0-3), Declan Sullivan (0-1), Donnacha Walsh; Colm Cooper (1-3,1f), Tommy Walsh (1-2), Darren O'Sullivan (0-1). Subs: Bryan Sheehan for D. Walsh; Kieran O'Leary for P. Galvin; Ronan O'Flatharta for T. Griffin;

Paul O'Connor for D. O'Sullivan; Daniel Bohane for A O'Shea.

Referee: Gearoid O'Conamha (Galway).

Man of the match

Kerry midfielder David Moran ruled the roost in the middle of the field when it mattered and kicked three points from frees. There were also strong claims from Colm 'Gooch' Cooper, Tommy Walsh, Declan O'Sullivan and Paul Galvin. Brian Roper, for the short period he was on, was Donegal's most influential player while Stephen Griffin ploughed a lone furrow up front until the arrival of Roper.

Turning Point

It came very early and fast. This was also going to be a tough one for Donegal but Kerry's two goals from 'the Gooch' on four minutes and Tommy Walsh three minutes later really sealed Donegal's fate.

Ref Watch

Gearoid O'Conamha had an easy afternoon even if he seemed to pay little regard to the new experimental rules.

Donegal blow nine point lead

REPORT: PETER CAMPBELL
PHOTOS: CONOR MCGONAGLE

Donegal 2-10
Mayo 1-13

It was disaster for Donegal as they squandered a nine point half-time lead to just get a draw against Mayo in O'Donnell Park, Letterkenny yesterday afternoon.

Donegal supporters were stunned at the end as they tried to square the result. They tried to hold their lead but paid a heavy penalty in the end although they were far from happy with referee, John Bannon, who denied them a penalty. Michael Murphy was in top form in the opening half as the Donegal men

lead by 2-8 to 0-5 at the break.

It was no more than they deserved as their front men tore the Mayo defence apart. Donegal will rarely have as better display in an opening half. They registered just one wide in a great display by the front men.

The star of the show was Michael Murphy in his first game of the year with goals on 90 seconds and 12 minutes. The first goal came after he received the ball from Conall Dunne and beat his marker on the outside to rifle home. The second was even more impressive as Murphy started the move 40m from goal and it was carried on by Stephen Griffin and David Walsh who found Murphy in front of goal and he made no mistake.

Good going forward

By that stage Donegal lead by 2-1 to 0-3, the point from a Stephen Griffin free inside a minute. Mayo did look good going forward and were rewarded with points from three Conor Mortimer points, two from frees. Indeed, his third point could have been a goal as Barry Moran flicked the ball on to him but it fell behind and he hooked it over the bar. Alan Dillon and the impressive Peadar Gardiner did pull points back for Mayo to leave them trailing by just three (2-2 to 0-5) after 19 minutes, but Donegal really upped their game in the second quarter. They were

rewarded with a succession of points from David Walsh, two Griffin frees and points from play from Eamon McGee, Michael Doherty and Ciaran Bonner to hold a very healthy half-time lead 2-8 to 0-5.

The second half was a much different affair. Billie Joe Padden had a Mayo point inside a minute while Donegal had the ball in the Mayo net within a minute. In probably their best move of the game, Neil Gallagher found himself free in front of goal but he did not take on the chance, opting to find Michael Murphy. And while the ball ended in the net, it was ruled out for Murphy being in the square.

Stephen Griffin pointed a free but Mayo took control through Ronan McGarrity in the middle. Conor Mortimer pointed and then set up Barry Moran for a goal. This was followed by points from Mickey Sweeney and Trevor

Mortimer to reduce the margin to just three points. Stephen Griffin pointed a free and when Ronan McGarrity was yellow carded it seemed Mayo's chance was gone with 15 minutes left.

The big turning point came a minute later when Murphy knocked a

ball back across the goal and Stephen Griffin seemed to be pulled back as he was about to take his goal. The penalty was not awarded and Mayo profited.

Barry Moran and Conor Mortimer (2) pointed to reduce the margin to the minimum with two minutes of normal time left. It seemed Donegal would still prevail as the two minutes of allotted time passed but John Bannon allowed an extra minute and Kieran Conroy popped up to send Mayo followers home happy.

There will be plenty of things for the Donegal management to ponder before their next game at home to Dublin on March 8th. They will take heart from the first half but will wonder how they lost a game that seemed secure.

DONEGAL: M Boyle; Declan Walsh, N McGee, P McDaid; F McGlynn, B Monaghan, E McGee (0-1); N Gallagher, C Bonner (0-2); R Kavanagh, C Dunne, David Walsh (0-1); M Doherty (0-1), S Griffin (0-5,5f), Michael Murphy (2-0). Subs.: B Boyle for Dunne; E Waide for McGlynn; C McFadden for Murphy; K McMenamin for David Walsh; L Thompson for Doherty

MAYO: D. Clarke; L. O'Malley, G Cafferkey, D Vaughan; P Gardiner (0-1), T Cunniffe, P Kelly; T Parsons, R McGarrity; B Padden (0-1), T Mortimer (0-1), A Dillon (0-1,f); C Mortimer (0-6,54f), B Moran (1-1), A Moran. Subs., B Kelly for Dillon; M Sweeney (0-1) for Kelly; P Harte for Padden; M Ronaldson for Parsons; K Conroy (0-1) for McGarrity (y/c)

Referee: J Bannon (Longford).

Man of the match

Michael Murphy was outstanding for Donegal on his return while Barry Monaghan, Neil Gallagher and Ciaran Bonner also worked hard. Ronan McGarrity was immense for Mayo while the Mortimers were also very important. The award goes to Trevor Mortimer who was the fulcrum of the Mayo comeback in the second half.

Turning point

The Mayo goal gave them the impetus but from a Donegal point of view, the decision of referee, John Bannon, not to give a penalty when Stephen Griffin was hauled back on 23 minutes helped Mayo.

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

DONEGAL 1-08
DUBLIN 0-13

Match Stats

Monday, March 9, 2009 **DONEGAL NEWS**

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT FR
TIERNEY PARK
PHOTOS BY DONNA MCBRIDE

DONEGAL/DUBLIN

Goals	1/0
Points	8/13
Wides	8/7
45s	2/0
Frees awarded	26/22
Frees scored	2/4
Short efforts	1/4
Yellow cards	0/1
Red cards	0/0

DONEGAL are still searching for a first National League win in 2009 after a gallant comeback attempt fell short of defeating Dublin in horrendous conditions at Fr Tierney Park, Ballyshannon yesterday.

John Joe Doherty's team came from six points down at half-time to be level heading into the final ten minutes. But, it was there that Dublin showed their worth, pusing on for victory thanks to points from Ger Brennan and Ross McConnell.

A 50th minute goal by Conall Dunne had helped haul Donegal from the brink and with a good second-half display, the home side might have taken something from the game, only to be let down by some poor passing, handling and some wayward shooting that wasn't helped by a brisk Ballyshannon gale that was accompanied at times by driving hail and rain showers.

Both sides were heading into the game bidding for a first win of the League season and it was the Dubs who made most of the early hay. Playing with the breeze in their backs, they were 0-7 to 0-1 up inside 23 minutes.

It took the off-colour hosts some 20 minutes to open their account with Brendan Boyle slotting over after a move that could have ended with a goal, the Ardara man popping over the bar after Bonner, Dunne and Griffin were all involved.

By that stage, Boyle - who was named at wing-forward - and Michael Murphy had traded places as Donegal looked to get into a contest that was fast slipping away, having already conceded five by the time they raised a flag.

Bernard Brogan and Kevin Bonner put the Dubs two up inside three minutes, with quick fire points from Conal Keaney, Ross McConnell and captain David Henry raising the cheers of the visiting fans.

At least three of those scores came from Donegal attacks breaking down, the home side having a frustrating tendency to work the ball deep into Dublin territory, only to lose possession at the vital moment. Donegal's early play was tipified when Griffin launched a 35-metre free straight into the arms of Barry Cahill, as he attempted a pass into David Walsh. It was a pattern that others would follow time and time again in a first-half that couldn't end quickly enough for Donegal.

After Boyle got Donegal off the mark, Keaney (free) and Bernard Brogan extended the Dublin lead to six points within the following three minutes.

Donegal showed five changes to the side that let a nine-point lead slip away to draw with Mayo last time out with Eoin Waide in for a first senior start and Raymond Sweeney, Kevin Cassidy, Christy Toye and Brendan Boyle all back in from the

off, while injuries deprived the home-sters of Frank McGlynn, Neil Gallagher and Barry Monaghan.

Conall Dunne had a sight of goal on the half-hour mark, but a brave interception by full-back Denis Bastic - who had to leave the park for the next five minutes to receive medical treatment - denied the St Eunan's ace.

Michael Murphy pulled a 25-metre free wide before Christy Toye saw a goal-bound effort deflected wide on the stroke of half-time, with Ciaran Bonner just failing to get a touch at the back post.

Trailing 0-7 to 0-1, Donegal were thankful that Dublin dried up for the final 12 minutes of the half.

One of the main talking points of the interval was an incident on 32 minutes that left Ciaran Bonner left sprawled on the turf. Dublin sub, the veteran Jason Sherlock, was clearly seen from the press box to have uncharacteristically kicked out at Bonner on the ground, though the attacker was exonerated as neither the linesman or the umpires had deemed Sherlock to be guilty of an offence.

Referee Marty Duffy from Sligo didn't do much to endear himself to the home crowd over the hour as the new rules strangely appeared not to be in effect for large portions of the contest.

Ten minutes after the changeover, Donegal found the gap out to eight points, with McConnell, Bernard Brogan and Conal Keaney on the mark after Griffin pointed Donegal's second score on 36 minutes.

The Tir Chonaill men received a lifeline in the form of a goal after Michael Murphy brilliantly judged his angles to point from the left flank on 48 minutes. Two minutes further had elapsed when the green flag was raised.

Christy Toye did well to win possession and he fed Dunne, who raced clear and finished with aplomb to the roof of the Dublin net. With the wind now in their sails, Donegal found themselves on top for a spell.

Michael Murphy converted a free, Ciaran Bonner fired over a sublime point from way out the right side after being fed by Cassidy before David Walsh clipped over to reduce the arrears to the minimum having been played in by a clever Toye flick. The move for that score started in the full-back line, where Paddy McDaid did well to win possession and he with the help of Cassidy helped send Bonner on his way with the

Glenswilly man feeding Toye.

A Keaney free after Bonner fouled the roaring Ger Brennan put Dublin two up, but Donegal weren't done. Murphy raised the roof with a massive score on 61 minutes when he concluded a fine move involving Toye, Kavanagh and Roper.

The teams were level when debutant Dara Gallagher belied his youthful years with the score of the game. Raymond Sweeney showed his experience to intercept a poor kick-out and he offloaded to the Glenties man, who split the sticks with an expertly placed kick from the left side.

Donegal just couldn't drive on, though, and the Dubs sealed their win with Brennan getting up for his point and the highly influential McConnell clipping over the clincher on

68 minutes: Michael Boyle prevented a Dublin gola in stoppage time with a super save from Barry Cahill, who was up to get on the end of an Alan Brogan centre.

Donegal now sit second from bottom and ahead of Sunday's trip to Galway, a relegation battle is in wait for John Joe and company, though the return of Cassidy and Toye were among the bright points yesterday.

DONEGAL: Michael Boyle; Eamó McGee, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Eoin Waide, Raymond Sweeney, Kevin Cassidy; Ciaran Bonner (0-1), Christy Toye; Brendan Boyle (0-1), Conall Dunne (1-0), Rory Kavanagh; Michael Murphy (0-3, 1f), Stephen Griffin (0-1, 1f), David Walsh (0-1). **SUBS:** Brian Roper for Boyle (43 mins); Dara Gallagher (0-1) for Griffin (54 mins).

DUBLIN: Stephen Cluxton; Paddy Andrews, Denis Bastic, Alan Hubbard; James Brogan, Ger Brennan (0-1), Barry Cahill; Ciaran Whelan, Ross McConnell (0-3); Diarmuid Connolly, Conal Keaney (0-4, 3f); David Henry (0-1); Blaine Kelly, Kevin Bonner (0-1), Bernard Brogan (0-3, 1f). **SUBS:** Jason Sherlock for Connolly (20 mins); Declan Lally for J. Brogan (35 mins); Bryan Cullen for Bonner (half-time); Alan Brogan for Henry (55 mins).

Yellow card: James Brogan (35 mins).

REFERE: Marty Duffy (Sligo).

GALWAY 1-16
DONEGAL 0-12

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT
PEARSE STADIUM
PHOTOS BY RAY RYAN/SPORTSFILE

Galway/Donegal

Goals	1/0
Points	16/12
Wides	6/13
45s	0/1
Frees awarded	22/14
Frees scored	4/13
Short efforts	1/1
Yellow cards	0/1
Red cards	0/0

DONEGAL'S poor start to the National Football League campaign continued yesterday afternoon in Pearse Stadium, Salthill, where a Michael Meehan inspired Galway shot down John Joe Doherty's charges by seven points.

Meehan hit a deadly 1-9 on a day when he demonstrated his reputation as one of the country's form-forwards at the moment, with a precise and stunning demolition of a dispirited Donegal.

Galway headed for the changing rooms at half-time to a hero's reception thanks to an opening half performance that saw them go in 1-11 to 0-2 ahead. A resurgent Donegal emerged for a period in part two that yielded seven scores on the bounce to bring them back to within five at a stage.

But, Galway showed their worth to close the game out with two late points from Man-of-the-Match Meehan and yet again Donegal's comeback would result in despair. The visitors ultimately got what they deserved, however, as Galway were by far and away the dominant force over the hour. Two points and two wides told its own story of Donegal's first-half, in which they struggled to get beyond the Galway '45'.

The introduction of Ciaran Bonner at the break sparked life into Donegal, who were staring at the proverbial mountain. Fifteen minutes into the second-half, Donegal still trailed by 12 despite Christy Toye scoring from play, McFadden registering a free and Murphy landing a '45' over the black spot.

In that time, Meehan scored twice either side of a fisted effort from Gareth Bradshaw, who was hit late by Neil McGee in the process of scoring and the action would be as the Donegal's defender's last as ref Pat McEnaney showed yellow.

Bonner got Donegal's momentum kick-started in the 54th minute and the Glenswilly man then fed Eoin Waide for his second point of the day from wing-back. Rory Kavanagh's quick free fed Bonner, who duly obliged and then the green and gold flags were hoisted to greet a David Walsh effort.

Bonner added another, sub Stephen Griffin stroked over and Christy Toye hit one from all of 40 metres. Briefly, the thought turned to what a Donegal goal might do for the contest. At 1-14 to 0-12, the tie would really have been placed in the pot, only for Meehan to strike two timely reminders of the way the script would read.

Yet again, it was a tale of woe for John Joe Doherty and company who, for the second week running, held a substantial post mortem in the dressing room after the game. The problems were there for all to see in the first-half as Donegal struggled to get the ball out into the dangerous for-

wards like Murphy and McFadden as well as failing to cope with the pressure from Meehan, Joyce and company at the other end.

Despite having named an unchanged team in the lead up to yesterday's contest, Donegal boss John Joe Doherty named five switches in the starting XV that took to the field. Paul Durcan replaced Michael Boyle in goal, Colm McFadden was handed a first start of the campaign in attack, while Leon Thompson and Brian Roper were also given places from the off.

Table toppers Galway, eager to preserve their perfect start to the League season, opened sharply with Damien Dunleavy getting on the end of the first move of the match to open the scoring inside of 15 seconds.

Colm McFadden clipped an upright with a free, before Michael Murphy got Donegal off the mark with a good point from play, only for Michael Meehan to round Neil McGee and find the range.

Sean Armstrong then flashed a goal chance wide of the target after Meehan helped Nicky Joyce's centre into his path. Armstrong stepped inside his man, but perhaps was a little greedy in option to strike for the net with bodies in his way.

Galway did extend their lead through Nicky Joyce and then Meehan stepped up to land a 46-metre free off the ground with the one-way traffic continuing to surge through the Tir Chonaill rearguard as Dunleavy got on the end of Meehan's knock-down to score.

Armstrong and Meehan, again, raised flags after Eoin Waide ended the famine at the other end, taking a pass from Rory Kavanagh to score in the 21st minute.

Disaster really landed at Donegal's feet in the 23rd minute when Meehan rounded Paddy McDaid to fire low under the body of Durcan for goal after being played in by Padraic Joyce.

The gap had stretched to eight points and Donegal were wilting fast.

The Galway net had rippled in the 18th minute when David Walsh clipped home, but it didn't register on the scoreboard as referee Pat McEnaney had already called the play back, penalising Roper for a double-hop.

Galway, thanks to two from Meehan and one each from Gareth Bradshaw and Joe Bergin opened up a massive twelve-point gap at the interval and the men in maroon left at

the break to a standing ovation, such was their dominance in part one, which they closed off with 1-5 unanswered in the space of the last 13 minutes.

While Donegal won the second-half 0-10 to 0-5, it merely placed a touch of respectability back onto the final score, though the result was never in any great doubt as Galway always had the bit.

With one point collected from four games, Donegal continue to hover dangerously above basement side Westmeath, ahead of the visit of All Ireland Champions Tyrone to Ballybofey on Saturday night.

GALWAY: Paul Doherty; Niall Coyne, Finian Hanley, Damien Burke; Garreth Bradshaw (0-2), Diarmuid Blake, Darren Mullahy; Joe Bergin (0-1), Mark Lyndon; Sean Armstrong (0-1), Padraic Joyce, Barry Cullinane; Damien Dunleavy (0-2), Michael Meehan (1-9, 4f), Nicky Joyce (0-1). SUBS: Declan Meehan for Mullahy (22 mins); Fiachra Breathnach for N. Joyce (24 mins); Matthew Clancy for Breathnach (50 mins); Gary Sice for Coyne (53 mins); David Reilly for Lydon (64 mins).

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Eoin Waide (0-2), Raymond Sweeney, Kevin Cassidy; Rory Kavanagh, Christy Toye (0-2); Brian Roper, Conall Dunne, David Walsh (0-1); Leon Thompson, Michael Murphy (0-2, 1'45'), Colm McFadden (0-1, 1f). SUBS: Michael Maguire for Sweeney (half-time); Ciaran Bonner (0-3) for Dunne (half-time); Johnny Gallagher for N. McGee (43 mins); Stephen Griffin (0-1) for Thompson (48 mins); Ryan Bradley for Murphy (56 mins).

Yellow card: Neil McGee (42 mins).

REFEREE: Pat McEnaney (Monaghan).

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Morale boosting win for John Joe and Donegal

DONEGAL TYRONE

0-11 0-08

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT SEAN MACCUMHAILL PARK. PHOTOS BY DECLAN DOHERTY

DETERMINED Donegal were a resurgent force on Saturday night as the under-strength Tir Chonail side overcame All Ireland Champions Tyrone to pick up a first League victory of 2009 that helps lift them out of the relegation zone and ease the pressure at the foot of the Division 1 table.

Five pointed frees from Stephen Griffin helped steer Donegal to victory against an off-colour Tyrone, who kicked a staggering 16 wides, ten of them in a second half in which they scored just once, against a depleted home side that was desperate for a morale-boosting win.

Despite being without a number of familiar faces, Donegal were full value for their win on a night that saw them banish some of the painful memories of the last few weeks, particularly those from the previous weeks' clash in Galway.

Manager John Joe Doherty disciplined a couple of players during the week and they were absent from the squad on Saturday night, while the Glen man was also down the likes of Kevin Cassidy and Colm McFadden to injury and the U21 contingent only started on the bench with John Joe granting a request from county U21 manager Sean Clerkin not to include them from the start with Wednesday week's Ulster semi final in mind. Eoin Waide and Michael Murphy did make late appearances from the bench though.

The performances of those players who came into the equation certainly sent out a message to those players who incurred the wrath of indiscipline, with a few men putting their hands up now for inclusion again when the management make their next selection. With a number of impressive performers also on the U21 team on Wednesday last, it's a clear

signal that reputation alone won't count with the current management, who have issued a clear memo that only the totally committed will be considered.

On the occasion of his 100th appearance in the senior county jersey, Christy Toye played a starring role in push Donegal on for the win. Everything good about Donegal's play involved the St Michael's man, who chipped in with a REPOE 20th minute point.

There were bright sparks too from Michael Maguire, who posted two brilliant first-half points on his first League start, the Naomh Columba man one of Donegal's best players before being withdrawn for a somewhat harsh yellow card call in the 50th minute.

Both managers made sweeping changes to their line-ups, with seven switched made by both Doherty and his opposite number Mickey Harte, who was without the injured duo Justin McMahon and Enda McGinley from their last-ditch win over Westmeath a week earlier.

It was a frantic opening on a perfect evening for football, with the teams sharing 12 points in the first 20 minutes and they parted level, 0-7 apiece, at the interval.

Two Sean Cavanagh frees, after Ryan Mellon had opened the scoring for the Red Hands, helped put the visitors 0-3 to 0-1 ahead after only seven minutes, the Donegal response coming from wing-back Michael Maguire, who slotted over in style from distance.

The Glen man, with a second lovely point from long-range from a Stephen Griffin pull-back and a Griffin free brought Donegal level before the Tir Chonail side missed a glorious goal chance in the 12th minute.

Michael Doherty put David Walsh in on goal, but he drove at goalkeeper John Devine, who was out to narrow the angles.

Colm McCullagh posted the score of the game on 17 minutes, dropping the ball just inside the near upright off his trusted left boot from a difficult angle on the left flank.

Sean Cavanagh's third point of the evening made it a two-point game, but Donegal, unlike in previous weeks, refused to go away, with Griffin on the mark before Christy Toye levelled the game for the fourth time, finding the range with ease after combining well with Roper.

It took a smart fisted effort from David Walsh, who was put through following some brilliance by Toye to manufacture the chance, to restore parity for the interval, after Owen Mulligan shot Tyrone ahead.

Referee Pat McGovern wasn't endearing himself to the green and gold contingent during the opening period with some questionable interpretations of the new rules to say the least shown by the official. Manager Doherty, mentor Tony Boyle, who was particularly incensed by one free given to Tyrone close to the break, and goalkeeper Paul Durcan among those to have a word in the ear of the man in black as they headed for the refreshments.

The second-half free count in Donegal's favour was ten-nil at an early juncture, but during a period where they were well on top they kicked three bad wides in succession that looked like they might come back and bite.

But, a point from sub Brian McGuigan after the hour mark was Tyrone's first since the 24th minute of the game - a remarkable 37 minutes in between. It represented their only flag of the second-half, while Donegal secured victory with points by Griffin (2), Roper and Doherty.

Sean Cavanagh could have stole an undeserved point for the visitors late on, but his powerful shot struck the post with a brilliant goal chance when he burst through on Durcan and Donegal, who could afford to go the final 14 minutes without troubling the scoreboard operator, held on to record a fine win.

It was no less than they deserved on the night with fine individual performances from Michael Maguire, Brendan Boyle, David Walsh, Brian Roper, Conall Dunne, Michael Doherty and, in particular, Man-of-the-Match Christy Toye, who looks like his form of old is ready to return.



More of the same will be required on Sunday when Donegal travel to Mullingar to face basement side Westmeath in the penultimate League encounter.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Johnny Gallagher, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne, Barry Monaghan, Michael Maguire (0-2); Brendan Boyle, Christy Toye (0-1); David Walsh (0-1), Brian Roper (0-1), Rory Kavanagh; Conall Dunne, Stephen Griffin (0-5, 5f), Michael Doherty (0-1, 1f). SUBS: Eoin Waide for Maguire (50 mins); Michael Murphy for Griffin (54 mins); Raymond Sweeney for Monaghan (66 mins); Ryan Bradley for Boyle (69 mins); Odhran Doherty for Dunne (71 mins).

Yellow cards: Michael Maguire (50 mins); Barry Monaghan (66 mins).

TYRONE: John Devine; PJ Quinn, Conor Gormley, Ciaran Gourley; Davy Harte, Stephen O'Neill, Philip Jordan; Kevin Hughes, Colin Holmes; Colm Cavanagh, Owen Mulligan (0-1), Tommy McGuigan; Colm McCullagh (0-2, 1f), Sean Cavanagh (0-3, 2f), Ryan Mellon (0-1). SUBS: Brian McGuigan (0-1) for Mellon (50 mins); Enda McGinley for Holmes (54 mins); Martin Swift for Quinn (55 mins); Martin Penrose for McCullagh (59 mins); Niall Gormley for T. McGuigan (67 mins); Cathal McCarron for Gormley (72 mins).

REFEREE: Pat McGovern (Galway).

MATCH STATS

	Donegal/Tyrone
Goals	0/0
Points	11/8
Wides	11/16
45s	0/1
Frees awarded	21/22
Frees scored	6/3
Yellow cards	2/0
Red cards	0/0

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Important victory for Donegal in fight to avoid drop

DONEGAL
WESTMEATH

0-15
1-07

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT CUSACK PARK. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL O'DONNELL

SOMETIMES just getting a victory is the important thing from games such as yesterday's National League clash in Mullingar that saw Donegal relegate disappointing Westmeath.

As a spectacle, yesterday's game certainly won't be up there with those in contention for the 'Best of 2009' DVDs at the end of the year, but from a Donegal point of view coming out on top is what mattered most.

They did so by coming good in the final third, with their big players standing tall during a period where Brendan Devenney came off the bench for a first intercounty appearance since last year's Championship, while Michael Hegarty came in for a first appearance of 2009.

Donegal had dominated possession in the opening stages and led 0-6 to 0-3 before being rocked by a Niall Kilcoyne goal just before the break. A David Walsh point gave them a slender cushion and, while Westmeath battled back to draw level again, Donegal kicked for home with Rory Kavanagh, up to being shown a yellow card, Christy Toye and Brendan Boyle immense.

From the team that defeated Tyrone last weekend, there was just one change with Ryan Bradley replacing Stephen Griffin in attack, but the big news on the team front on the day was the return of the enigmatic Devenney to the fold.

Denis Glennon, from a fourth minute free won by Niall Kilcoyne off Neil McGee, opened the scoring for the home team, but a minute later Christy Toye levelled matters when he deftly flicked the ball over his shoulder after some industrious approach work by Dunne and Roper.

Even by that early stage, Donegal should have been well in the clear though. Just 15 seconds into the game, All Star goalkeeper Gary Connaughton had to be at his best to deny

Ryan Bradley. From the throw-in, Toye batted down for Boyle and the ball was worked up to put the Buncrana man in on goal, but his shot was well saved by Connaughton.

After shooting two wides and dropping two into the hands of Connaughton, Donegal took the lead in the ninth minute when Boyle stroked over after running onto a clever off-load by Roper.

Just over a minute later, Conall Dunne got his angles to perfection to extend the advantage from a pass by the influential Rory Kavanagh, who won a mountain of ball for the visitors during a good spell of pressure.

Kavanagh was involved again for Donegal's next point as he set up Ryan Bradley, who made it a three-point game with a score that was made by the sublime vision of Christy Toye, whose pin-point crossfield ball gave the Eunan's man possession.

Brendan Boyle doubled his tally with a fantastic kick from way out the right before Michael Ennis scored Westmeath's first point from play on 25 minutes. Ryan Bradley and Glenn (free) traded points and Donegal led by double scores as the interval loomed.

Westmeath were handed a lifeline in the final minute of the half's normal time when the Tir Chonaill rearguard failed to deal with a poor Glennon free that dropped short. Niall Kilcoyne could scarcely believe his luck when he was allowed not only to fetch the ball from the sky, but then being afforded the freedom to turn and plant a left-footed shot beyond Paul Durcan to the Donegal net.

David Walsh split the sticks two minutes into stoppage time to give Donegal a slender 0-7 to 1-3 advantage as the sides parted for the dressing rooms amid a drenching Midlands deluge.

Michael Doherty capitalised on a poor pass out of the Westmeath defence to clip Donegal into a two-point lead with the first point of the second-half, but inside the next eight minutes the home team, with a renewed spring in their steps, drew level thanks to Bannon and Doran.

Inspirational scored from Kavanagh and Toye, after a brilliant block by Brendan Boyle on Glennon's goal-bound shot, put Donegal in the driving seat again, before Devenney and Hegarty were introduced on 50 minutes.

Toye brilliantly fired over his third of the game before good link-up between Bradley and Griffin saw the former send Donegal into a four-point lead.

While Westmeath did have time for two more points, from Glennon and Michael Ennis, Donegal finished well with points from play by Griffin and Hegarty coming either side of a 13-metre free by Roper.

Impressively, that placed ball attempt by Roper was Donegal's only point from a free all afternoon, with Bradley and Toye doing the bulk of the damage with a hat-trick of points each and Brendan Boyle chipping in with two from a midfield that contributed one third of the Tir Chonaill total.

It might not have been pretty, but it's a case of job done for John Joe and company, who have sights set firmly on beating Derry on Sunday week to preserve their top flight status.

Donegal had good displays from Toye, Kavanagh and Boyle, as well as Ryan Bradley and Barry Monaghan.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Johnny Gallagher, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Charlie Byrne, Barry Monaghan, Michael Maguire; Brendan Boyle (0-2), Christy Toye (0-3); David Walsh (0-1), Brian Roper, Rory Kavanagh (0-1); Conall Dunne (0-1), Ryan Bradley (0-3), Michael Doherty (0-1). SUBS: Stephen Griffin (0-1) for Dunne (36 minutes); Michael Hegarty (0-1) for Roper (50 mins); Brendan Devenney for Doherty (50 mins); Brian Roper (0-1, 1f) for Kavanagh (52 mins); Raymond Sweeney for Byrne (53 mins); Ronan MacNiallais for Griffin (67 mins).

Yellow card: Rory Kavanagh (51 mins), Stephen Griffin (66 mins).

WESTMEATH: Gary Connaughton; Francis Boyle, Kieran Gavin, John Keane; Alan Claffey, Derek Heavin, Doran Harte (0-1); Niall Kilcoyne (1-0), David Duffy; Michael Ennis (0-1), John Smyth, Conradh Reilly; Thomas McDaniel, Denis Glennon (0-3, 2f), Conor Lynam. SUBS: Dermot Bannon (0-1) for McDaniel (34 mins); Paul Bannon for Kilcoyne (51 mins); John Conellan for Claffey (58 mins); Keith Scally for Reilly (60 mins).

REFEREE: Aidan Mangan (Kerry).

MATCH STATS

	Donegal/Westmeath
Goals	0/1
Points	15/7
Wides	7/9
45s	0/2
Frees awarded	19/26
Frees scored	1/2
Short efforts	7/3
Yellow cards	2/0
Red cards	0/0

Top flight status in own hands

WESTMEATH 1-7
DONEGAL 0-15

Report: Peter Campbell
Photos: Conor McGonagle

Donegal consigned Westmeath to Division Two with a convincing win in Cusack Park, Mullingar and in the process gave themselves a chance of staying in the top flight.

However, the Tir Chonaill men are still in relegation trouble because of Mayo's win over Galway and Dublin's draw with Kerry. They will travel to Maghera in two weeks time needing a win to survive.

In this game Kerry referee, Alan Mangan, was the centre of attention in the first half with his interpretation of the handpass rule. Donegal were the main victims of his fussy whistling and the visiting supporters and mentors made their feelings known at half-time. Mangan had missed the push in the back by Niall Kilcoyne a minute from the break and he took full advantage to fire home a Westmeath goal.

That score put the home side on level terms, 1-3 to 0-6 after Donegal had dominated for most of the half. Points from midfielders Brendan Boyle (2) and Christy Toye had helped while new full-forward Ryan

Bradley chipped in with two points also. Bradley could have got Donegal off to the perfect start but failed to beat Gary Connaughton from point blank range after just 15 seconds.

Conall Dunne also had a very good score, converting from an awkward angle after ten minutes. Overall Donegal were in charge although the usual propensity for the short pass was at the expense of a cutting edge up front.

Westmeath had relied on two pointed frees from Denis Glennon and one from play from Michael Ennis as they played second fiddle, especially around midfield.

Two minutes into added time at the end of the half David Walsh added the last score to put Donegal deservedly ahead at the break.



Brian Roper laying the ball off under pressure from Derek Heavin during Sunday's National League clash in Mullingar. (3103)

The rain came for the second half but otherwise it was a similar pattern with Michael Doherty pointing inside a minute but then Westmeath got back on terms after ten minutes with points from Dermot Bannon and half-back, Doran Harte. But it was then that Donegal responded

weill with a magnificent score from Rory Kavanagh from over 50m. This was followed by two Christy Toye points and from there Donegal never looked back.

In between the Toye points, Rory Kavanagh was yellow carded as he hauled John Smyth back. Brian Roper, who had been replaced minutes earlier, was brought back in and he steadied the ship.

In the final ten minutes Westmeath did put on something of a surge but they had little bite apart from Glennon, who got through on one run but Brendan Boyle stepped in to make a brave block and deny him.

Stephen Griffin picked up a yellow card also with four minutes left before Brian Roper (free) and Michael Hegarty closed out the game in the final minutes.

The winners' only score from a free came in the final minute when Roper won and pointed. All of the starting forward line got on the scoresheet while the midfield partnership of Christy Toye and Brendan Boyle accounted for five of their total.

Westmeath: G Connaughton; F Boyle, K Gavin, J Keane; A Claffey, D Heavin, D Harte (0-1); N Kilcoyne (1-0), D Duffy; M Ennis (0-2), J Smyth, C Reilly; T McDaniel, D Glennon (0-3,2f), C Lynam. Subs: D Bannon (0-1) for McDaniel 30; P Bannon for Kilcoyne 52; J Connellan for Claffey 56; K Scally for Reilly 60.

Donegal: P Durcan; J Gallagher, N McGee, P McDaid; C Byrne, B Monaghan, M McGuire; B Boyle (0-2), C Toye (0-3); D Walsh (0-1), B Roper (0-1,f), R Kavanagh (0-1); C Dunne (0-1), R Bradley (0-3), M Doherty (0-1). Subs: S Griffin (0-1) for Dunne 37; M Hegarty (0-1) for Roper; B Devenney for Doherty, both 50; B Roper for Kavanagh y/c 54; R Sweeney for Byrne 55; R MacNiallais for Griffin y/c 66

Referee: A Mangan (Kerry)

GAA - Allianz National Football League Division 1

DERRY
DONEGAL0-14
0-10REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY
AT WATTY GRAHAM PARK
PHOTOS BY OLIVER MCVEIGH

DONEGAL'S relegation to Division 2 was confirmed yesterday following a four-point defeat to North West rivals Derry, who advance to the League final for the second year in succession.

With Dublin hammering Westmeath, even a draw wouldn't have been good enough to keep Donegal in the top flight. As it was, a tame effort from the Tir Chonaill outfit condemned them to the drop.

Derry, meanwhile, are on course to retain the Division One title having set up a repeat of last year's final following the win and Kerry's win over Galway in the top of the table clash.

Leading by the minimum, 0-6 to 0-5, at the interval, Derry hit five points to Donegal's one in the third quarter in a spell that was to prove pivotal in the win for Damien Cassidy's charges.

Donegal were well below par on a sunny afternoon at the foot of the Glenshane Pass and only for a half-a-dozen frees by Michael Doherty keeping them ticking, the gap could have been a landslide one.

Referee Pdraig Hughes was the topic of debate from both sets of fans throughout. In a far from cynical first-half, the free county stood at 32, with some quite peculiar calls from the official throughout.

Charlie Byrne's bid to beat an ankle injury was an unsuccessful one, with the Malin wing-back missing out on a place in the team and Shane McGowan of Bundoran the man to profit in the only change to the starting XV from that which beat Westmeath a fortnight ago.

Despite a League final place - and a chance to defend their crown against Kerry - being up for grabs, Derry boss Damien Cassidy opted to continue the Oak Leaf rotation policy and made eight changes from the win over Tyrone. Paddy Bradley was one of the octet to make way and the star forward was not among the subs yesterday.

Kevin McCloy, Sean Marty Lockhart and Paul Cartin were others who were not in the first fifteen, though there was a recall for Mark Lynch at corner forward, after he shook off an injury.

Lynch turned in an impressive first-half's work that saw him score two precious points, the second of which he fired over after a laboured move forward by the hosts in stoppage time.

That was enough to send Damien Cassidy's team into a 0-6 to 0-5 half-time lead.

Match Stats

Derry/Donegal

Goals	0/0
Points	14/10
Wides	8/9
45s	0/1
Frees awarded	21/31
Frees scored	4/6
Short efforts	2/0
Yellow cards	0/1
Red cards	0/0

Donegal had got off to a good start with the roving Michael Maguire opening the scoring with barely 20 seconds ticked on the watch after Boyle and Dunne advanced the play when Christy Toyne broke down the throw-in.

Barry McGoldrick levelled and Seamus Bradley put Derry ahead, only for a Doherty free and a Brian

Roper point from play to restore parity for Donegal again by the eleventh minute.

Roper fired over the shoulder to put Donegal ahead again, but Doherty's second free of the day on 25 minutes - a great kick from distance - had the scores tied for the fifth time after Lynch and Enda Lynn registered at the other end.

All the pre-match talk was of the eight changes in the Derry team and how the Sperrin County side were not too enamoured by the prospect of a day out on Sunday week. No Paddy Bradley, no Kevin McCloy and no Joe Diver in the starting line-up threw some weight behind that notion, but in the third quarter of the game, the red and white clad outfit stepped up their challenge and ultimately Damien Cassidy's team proved much too strong for lightweight Donegal in the physical stakes.

While Donegal hit a couple of bad wides after the resumption, Derry moved three in front as James Kielt scored either side of a free from the returned Mark Lynch, who landed his effort from close to the sideline.

Michael Doherty raised a flag at the other end with a free, but Derry pushed on with Brian Og McAlary and Sean Leo McGoldrick on the mark as the Oak Leaf side moved five in front, 0-11 to 0-6, on 51 minutes.

Donegal sent on the experienced heads of Brendan Devenney, Kevin Cassidy and Michael Hegarty when the going got tough, but Derry were able to send in Sean Marty Lockhart to steady the ship.

Doherty scored another three frees and Brendan Boyle scored a bizarre late point, as Christy Toyne's effort was deflected out by Barry Gillis, only for the ball to rebound over the crossbar off the head of the Tir Chonaill midfielder.

But, Eoin Bradley, James Kielt and Enda Muldoon hit points for Derry to keep their hopes alive of retaining their title.

Fourteen minutes from time, Michael Murphy broke free from the shackles and riddled a shot at goal, only for Sean Marty Lockhart to deny him with a timely block that kept Derry at a comfortable distance and ensured the gap was too wide when Donegal went in search of something late on.

While Derry face Kerry the League final on Sunday week, Donegal have work to do before they welcome Antrim to Ballybofey in the Ulster quarter-final on June 14.

Derry: Barry Gillis; Joe Keenan, Kevin McGuckin, Gerard O'Kane; Brian Og McAlary (0-1), Barry McGoldrick (0-1, 1f), Sean Leo McGoldrick (0-1); Patsy Bradley, Enda Muldoon (0-1); Enda Lynn (0-1), Brian Mullan, James Kielt (0-3, 1f); Seamus Bradley (0-1), Eoin Bradley (0-2, 1f), Mark Lynch (0-3, 1f). SUBS: Sean Marty Lockhart for Keenan (47 mins); Paul Cartin for McAlary (61 mins); Chris McKeague for Lynn (63 mins); Joe Diver for Muldoon (71 mins).

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Johnny Gallagher, Neil McGee, Paddy McDaid; Shane McGowan, Barry Monaghan, Michael Maguire (0-1); Brendan Boyle (0-1), Christy Toyne; David Walsh, Conall Dunne, Rory Kavanagh; Brian Roper (0-2), Ryan Bradley, Michael Doherty (0-6, 6f). SUBS: Michael Murphy for Bradley (half-time); Brendan Devenney for Walsh (44 mins); Kevin Cassidy for McGowan (44 mins); Michael Hegarty for Roper (53 mins); Dara Gallagher for Dunne (60 mins); Charlie Byrne for McDaid (64 mins).

Yellow Card: Paddy McDaid (64 mins).

Referee: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh).

Donegal into relegation

Donegal head for Division Two



Donegal manager John Joe Doherty, third behind fence, watches the game from beside the Donegal dugout because of a pitch suspension at the Allianz GAA National Football League game at Maghera, Co. Derry. Photo: Oliver McVeigh / SPORTSFILE

GAA
Páirc an Chrócaigh
Baile Átha Cliath 3
Guthán +353 1 836 3222
Faics +353 1 865 8650
www.gaa.ie

GAA
Croke Park
Dublin 3
Telephone +353 1 836 3222
Fax +353 1 865 8650
www.gaa.ie



Allianz GAA Football National League Roinn 1

Team	Pld	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
Kerry	7	6	1	0	114	83	31	13
Derry	7	4	1	2	101	81	20	9
Galway	7	4	1	2	106	92	14	9
Mayo	7	2	3	2	90	85	5	7
Tyrone	7	3	1	3	96	97	-1	7
Dublin	7	2	2	3	124	110	14	6
Donegal	7	2	1	4	86	99	-13	5
Westmeath	7	0	0	7	68	138	-70	0

Allianz GAA Football National League Roinn 2

Team	Pld	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
Monaghan	7	5	1	1	130	91	39	11
Cork	7	5	1	1	110	75	35	11
Kildare	7	4	2	1	115	88	27	10
Armagh	7	4	0	3	108	103	5	8
Meath	7	2	2	3	82	87	-5	6
Laois	7	3	0	4	96	116	-20	6
Fermanagh	7	1	1	5	87	106	-19	3
Wexford	7	0	1	6	78	140	-62	1

GAA
 Páirc an Chrócaigh
 Baile Átha Cliath 3
 Guthán +353 1 836 3222
 Faics +353 1 865 8650
 www.gaa.ie

GAA
 Croke Park
 Dublin 3
 Telephone +353 1 836 3222
 Fax +353 1 865 8650
 www.gaa.ie



Allianz GAA Football National League Roinn 3

Team	Pld	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
Down	7	5	0	2	109	87	22	10
Tipperary	7	5	0	2	104	90	14	10
Offaly	7	3	1	3	89	107	-18	7
Louth	7	3	0	4	109	98	11	6
Roscommon	7	3	0	4	91	94	-3	6
Cavan	7	3	0	4	91	94	-3	6
Limerick	7	3	0	4	81	92	-11	6
Longford	7	2	1	4	76	88	-12	5

Allianz GAA Football National League Roinn 4

Team	Pld	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
Antrim	7	5	2	0	154	69	85	12
Sligo	7	6	0	1	122	71	51	12
Leitrim	8	5	1	2	128	101	27	11
Waterford	7	4	1	2	104	74	30	9
Wicklow	7	3	2	2	143	91	52	8
Clare	7	2	0	5	114	95	19	4
Carlow	7	2	0	5	86	110	-24	4
London	7	2	0	5	72	116	-44	4
Kilkenny	7	0	0	7	30	226	-196	0