

2012

Senior Football – Team manager: Jim McGuinness

Dr. Mc Kenna Cup. – Section C

1	8 th Jan	1	O'Donnell Park	Donegal	0-09	UUJ	0-11
2	15 th Jan	2	Breffni Park	Cavan	1-14	Donegal	2-08
3	18 th Jan	3	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-09	Derry	1-08
	22 nd Jan	Semi finals	Athletic Grounds	Tyrone	2-12	Fermanagh	1-04
	22 nd Jan	Semi finals	Athletic Grounds	Derry	0-11	Down	0-09
	28 th Jan	Final	Athletic Grounds	Tyrone	1-14	Derry	2-08

Senior Football Championship 2012:

4	20th May		Breffni Park	Cavan	1-10	Donegal	1-16
	27 th May	Qtr-final	Clones	Monaghan	1-12	Antrim	1-09
	3 rd June	Qtr-final	Enniskillen	Fermanagh	1-08	Down	2-10
	10 th June	Qtr-final	Athletic Grounds	Armagh	1-13	Tyrone	0-19
5	17th June	Qtr final	McCumhaill Park	Donegal	2-13	Derry	0-09
	24 th June	Semi final	Clones	Down	1-14	Monaghan	1-13
6	30th June	Semi final	Clones	Donegal	0-12	Tyrone	0-10
7	22nd June	Ulster Final	Clones	Donegal	2-18	Down	0-13
8	5th Aug	Qtr-final	Croke Park	Donegal	1-12	Kerry	1-10
9	26th Aug	Semi-Final	Croke Park	Donegal	0-18	Cork	1-11
	2 nd Sept.	Semi-Final	Croke Park	Mayo	0-19	Dublin	0-16
10	23rd Sept.	Final	Croke Park	Donegal	2-11	Mayo	0-13

National League. Div 1

11	4 th Feb (sat)		Newry	Down	1-10	Donegal	1-09
12	11 th Feb		O'Donnell Park	Donegal	2-06	Laois	2-09
13	3 rd March		MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-07	Cork	0-06
14	10 th March		Fitzgerald Stadium	Kerry	2-16	Donegal	1-08
15	18 th March		Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-17	Mayo	1-07
16	24 th March		Croke Park	Dublin	2-16	Donegal	0-13
17	8 th April		MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-13	Armagh	0-10

League table

	P	W	L	D	Pts
Kerry	7	5	1	1	11
Cork	7	4	2	1	9
Down	7	4	3	0	8
Mayo	7	3	3	1	7
Dublin	7	3	4	0	6
Donegal	7	3	4	0	6
Armagh	7	2	4	1	5
Louth	7	2	5	0	4

	15 th April	Semi final	Croke Park	Mayo	2-15	Kerry	1-17
	15 th April	Semi final	Croke Park	Cork	2-17	Down	1-12
	29 th April	Final	Croke Park	Cork	2-10	Mayo	0-11

GAA - POWER NI DR MCKENNA CUP SECTION C

Donegal beaten by McGourty's late intervention in opener

DONEGAL 0-09
 UUJ 0-11

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT
 O'DONNELL PARK PHOTOS BY DECLAN
 DOHERTY

DEFEAT to a team in blue - 2012 started as 2011 had finished for Donegal as the students from University Ulster Jordanstown secured a two-point win over Jim McGuinness's side in a low key McKenna Cup opener in Letterkenny yesterday.

It was a typically rusty McKenna Cup outing with plenty of cobwebs to be dusted off before the serious business of the League comes over the horizon in early February, but it was hardly a day to have the management reaching for the panic buttons.

Antrim dual star CJ McGourty had been kept scoreless for 58 minutes, but he popped up with his team's last four points to seal the win, just when it looked as if Donegal might have kicked on for a win.

McGourty, like many of his teammates, is to sit an exam at 9am today, but yesterday he penned the right answers to an exam that wasn't as much testing as it was labouring.

This contest was the perfect example of a tit-for-tat affair. Five times in the first-half, seven times in all, the teams were level pegging and it was the students - who are deep in preparation for the Sigerson Cup - who ultimately ended the strongest with McGourty's quartet of scores the difference in the end.

"There wasn't a great intensity in the game," said Jim McGuinness without a hint of concern as he merely sets the wheels in motion for the long season ahead.

"We tired and fatigued a bit at the end and we'll look at that and factor it into the next four weeks.

"There would be very few who we think would be at the level today. There were maybe only three or four out of the 15 that came up to the level of fitness or competitiveness.

"There's a lot of work to be done within the squad and that's where we are headed now."

McGuinness might well have been in experimental mode, but yesterday's starting XV still contained seven players who had started the All-Ireland semi-final defeat to Dublin in August.

Indeed, just one player was handed a starting debut yesterday as former Cork panelist Conor McManus - now playing his club football in Kildare - lined out alongside Neil Gallagher at centrefield.

McManus was withdrawn at the interval, however, having looked a little off the pace required, but with another few weeks of training to go it would be wrong to write off his chances at this premature point.

And it's a similar tale for the others drafted in, with the bright points from Donegal coming from Ryan Bradley, Anthony Thompson, David Walsh, Dermot Molloy and Patrick McBrearty.

Molloy scored five of Donegal's total and the Glenties man hit four of his team's five points in a first-half

that told perfectly the tale of a sometimes erratic afternoon for 'Brick'. He finished with five points, but also kicked five wides, while McBrearty looked sharp and posted two fine second-half points.

Neil Gallagher foraged well, but the big Glenswilly man was sent off -

shown a second yellow card by referee Martin McErlane - in a manic injury time that saw Donegal twice denied by 'keeper Shane McCormick. McBrearty was first to try his luck, but after bursting menacingly goalward his drilled effort was stopped by McCormick.

The UUJ netminder had to be alert soon after to claw to safety after Molloy's punt evaded Gallagher and a wicked bounce had McCormick panicking. Gallagher was sent off following a foul on Leo McLoone, the Donegal man who impressed at centre-back for UUJ yesterday.

Donegal had a couple of earlier goal chances - the best of them falling to David Walsh 15 minutes from time, the Ballintra man riffling wide of the mark after a good opening presented a chance to him.

"We had a few goal chances and maybe three or four that dropped into the 'keeper's hands as well," mused McGuinness.

"With the breeze they maybe should have gone over the bar - but at the same time we haven't got a lot of work done and they're not long back from the holiday and they had a long year last year.

"Now it's just about getting back onto the training field and getting a wee bit of work done and starting to build from there for the next month."

Five times in the first-half UUJ led,

but on each occasion Donegal pulled level. Chris Clarke posted UUJ's first three scores of the day, but two from Molloy sandwiched one by Bradley as Donegal stayed with the slicker students.

'Brick' landed two more - the second a fabulous effort that just squeezed inside the upright at the end of the half - to level on two more occasions after Neil McAdam and Ciaran Donnelly got on the mark for the visitors.

Half-time sub Patrick McBrearty wasted no time in stamping his mark on proceedings with two points inside ten minutes of his coming into the game. At this point it seemed as if Donegal were in control, but those notions were quashed by Diarmuid McNulty and Ciaran Donnelly (free), who restored an even-keel once again.

Donegal then had goal chances,

with Molloy denied by McCormick and then Walsh drilling wide.

Two by McGourty put UUJ ahead again, only for Bradley and Molloy to tee up the mammoth finish - where McGourty had the final say.

"We came with a pretty weakened team, but the lads showed tremendous heart and effort to get this win," said UUJ manager Adrian McGuckin.

"We got a couple of injuries to big players at the start of the second-half and we have a lot of big players missing too.

"CJ came good. He wasn't in it at all, but he has worked the scores that won it for us - and he's doing an exam now at 9 in the morning."

Donegal: Peter Boyle; Peter Witherow, Neil McGee, Paddy McGrath; Marty Boyle, Anthony Thompson, Frank McGlynn; Neil Gallagher,

Conor McManus; Gary McFadden, Ryan Bradley (0-2), David Walsh; Christy Toye, Stephen Griffin, Dermot Molloy (0-5). SUBS: Patrick McBrearty (0-2, 1f) for McManus (half-time); Eamon McGee for Witherow (52 mins); Conor Classon for McFadden (55 mins); Daniel McLaughlin for Toye (55 mins).

UUJ: Shane McCormick; Carlus McWilliams, Andrew McClean, Ryan Pickering; Ciaran McGinley, Leo McLoone, Eoin Waide; Niall Donnelly, Neil McAdam (0-1); Chris Clarke (0-3), Ciaran Donnelly (0-2, 1f), Conor Sheridan; CJ McGourty (0-4, 2f), Kieran Hughes, Diarmuid McNulty (0-1). SUBS: Conor Davey for McWilliams (half-time); Chris Duggan for N. Donnelly (38 mins); Paul Devlin for C. Donnelly (56 mins).

Referee: Martin McErlane (Derry).

GAA - POWER NI DR MCKENNA CUP GROUP C

Beating in Breffni for Donegal



DONEGAL.....1-14



CAVAN.....2-08

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT
KINGSPAN BREFFNI PARK
PHOTOS BY BRIAN
LAWLESS/SPORTSFILE

DONEGAL suffered a second Dr McKenna Cup defeat yesterday in Breffni Park as Cavan took advantage of a Tir Chonaill no-show for much of the second-half to record a deserved three-point win.

In an early dress rehearsal for their May 20th Championship showdown, Donegal's line-up was almost unrecognisable from the team that contested last year's All-Ireland final - and from that which will joust with Val Andrews' charges in the summer

Yesterday, Donegal had many encouraging signs in the first-half, but they were non-existent in a second-half in which they scored just 1-1 - with the goal coming from sub Patrick McBreaty in the second minute of added time.

After the game, McGuinness put the collapse down to the heavy training his side have been doing since the defeat to UUJ last weekend in Letterkenny. Many of the more recognisable faces were 'left behind' yesterday, as McGuinness lined out a real experimental line-out.

He handed first senior starts to Killybegs goalkeeper Michael Mullin and Sean MacCumahills' exciting prospect Martin O'Reilly - and both men showed up well, with O'Reilly not at all looking out of place at num-

ber 12. Dungloe forward Adrian Hanlon was back in the county colours for a competitive game for the first time since the Championship tussle with Antrim last May, after which he was axed for a disciplinary breach, but he was withdrawn complaining of a hamstring injury at the break.

Those aside, there were also recalls to the starting XV for Declan Walsh (Malin), Johnny Bonner (Naomh Conaill) and Christopher Murrin (Killybegs) who'd had varying periods of time since last they made fleeting appearances in Donegal teams.

Murrin's afternoon lasted just 42 minutes as the big Killybegs man was on the receiving end of a heavy blow that landed him with a horrible facial injury that had him in agony. McKinley was among Donegal's top performers before he was sent off on 62 minutes. The Newton man was given a second yellow card in a short space of time for a clumsy challenge that floored Declan McKiernan, which detracted from an otherwise good showing.

In the first-half, Stephen Griffin stepped up to the plate to give Donegal a narrow interval lead - after Cavan had started like a house on fire.

Griffin was scoreless last weekend against UUJ, but a seven-point haul in Friday's challenge game against Roscommon's St Brigid's appeared to have ignited the St Nauf's man's confidence. Having kicked two earlier points, it was Griffin who got in for the game's opening goal in the 18th minute.

From McKinley's dart, the full-forward collected, but after being forced to retreat he got back on the ball when O'Reilly threaded him through and the clinical Griffin slammed home.

The goal put Donegal ahead for the first time, but Cavan were quick to restore the contest to an even-keel

as midfielder McKiernan got up to notch his second point.

Donegal were stunned in the first minute as Cavan landed two expertly-taken points from Gearoid McKiernan and Niall Smith. Daniel McLaughlin's persistence paid off when he rattled over for Donegal on 6 minutes, but a free by Raymond Galligan restored the two-point cushion.

McLaughlin and Galligan swapped points and Griffin (free) and Eugene Keating did likewise before Griffin's goal altered the course of things.

McKiernan drew his side level and Breffni boys were ahead again when the ice-cool Galligan slotted over a 45-metre free.

Gary McFadden and Griffin (free) restored the lead for Donegal, but again Cavan stayed in touch as through the marauding McKiernan.

With the last action of the half, Donegal picked up the interval advantage - and in some style. Griffin fabulously swung over after Daniel McLaughlin's superb interception to rob McKiernan of the ball without so much as breaking a stride.

Cavan were a different proposition at the start of the second-half and continued an almost exclusive ownership of winning ball in the middle third, where Donegal just couldn't get to grips with things again - and is the one area in urgent need of repair.

After Niall McDermott levelled things up, Cavan took control with a goal on 51 minutes. Galligan majestically fielded a high ball and was taken to ground by a defender leaving ref Reynolds with little option but to award the penalty.

Rookie 'keeper Mullin saved McDermott's kick, but the number 13 reacted quickest to net the rebound.

Cavan kicked on from here with Smith, Gearoid McKiernan and Declan McKiernan stretching the lead to six before Christy Toye finally got Donegal's first point of part two - nine minutes from the end of the tie.

After McKinley was red carded, Galligan hustled over another for the hosts, while sub Ray Cullivan had a goal chance blocked by a combination of Mullin and Declan Walsh. With time almost at a close, subs Molloy and McBreaty combined brilliantly, the latter finishing a well-taken goal to bring Donegal a little closer at the end.

As experiments go, it may well prove to be a worthwhile one. Time will tell - and Donegal have four months to find out before next they battle in Breffni, when the stakes will have considerably heightened.

Cavan: Fintan Reilly; Barry Walters, Sean McCormick, Damien Barkey; Dane O'Dowd, Padraic O'Reilly, John McCutcheon; Gearoid McKiernan (0-4), David Givney; Niall Smith (0-2), Declan McKiernan (0-1), Stephen Jordan; Niall McDermott (1-2, 1f), Eugene Keating (0-1), Raymond Galligan (0-3, 3f). **SUBS:** Fergal Slowey for Barkey (6 mins); Conor McClarey for Galligan (65 mins); Mark McKeever for Jordan (65 mins); Ray Cullivan for Keating (68 mins).

Donegal: Michael Mullin; Declan Walsh, Eamon McGee, Johnny Bonner; Marty Boyle, Anthony Thompson, Thomas McKinley; Conor Clason, Christy Toye (0-1); Gary McFadden (0-1), Daniel McLaughlin (0-2), Martin O'Reilly; Christopher Murrin, Stephen Griffin (1-4, 2f), Adrian Hanlon. **SUBS:** Conor McManus for Boyle (half-time); Dermot Molloy for Hanlon (half-time); Patrick McBreaty (1-0) for Murrin (42 mins); David Walsh for McLaughlin (56 mins).

Referee: Con Reynolds (Down).



Stephen Griffin of Donegal.

GAA – POWER NI DR MCKENNA CUP GROUP C

Donegal wither in second-half against Oak Leaf

DONEGAL0-09
DERRY1-08

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT
MACCUMHALL PARK
PHOTOS BY GARY FOY

WITH their McKenna Cup chances already over, victory wasn't too high on the agenda for Donegal on Wednesday night – and it showed as the Tír Chonaill men fell to a third defeat in the competition at the hands of Derry in Ballybofey.

Donegal gave the Oak Leaf side a decent run, but with nothing to play for in the competition it wasn't a surprise that there was a lack of edge or bite in the hosts' play.

Derry continued their unbeaten run in 2012 as they outscored Donegal by five points to two in the second-half as Jim McGuinness' side again wilted in the second-half.

Gerard O'Kane scored a brace of superb points for John Brennan's men and with Conleith Gilligan's third-minute penalty having been dispatched clinically to the net it was the away team that left the happier.

For Donegal it was basically a mirror image of Sunday's game in Cavan: they led by two at half-time, but shredded in the second-half to fall to defeat having managed just two scores in the second 35 minutes.

Derry, though, preserved their unbeaten start to the year, playing in periods with a defensive style that wasn't too dissimilar to Donegal's

Match Stats

Donegal/Derry

Goals	0/1
Points	9/8
Wides	5/7
45s	0/0
Frees awarded	29/31
Frees scored	4/2
Short efforts	3/3
Yellow cards	5/4
Red cards	0/0

2011 model.

The crucial period for Derry was the third quarter. There, they scored four points in a row that spurred their challenge. They emerged for the second-half two in arrears after Dermot Molloy inspired the home side with five first-half scores, but within 14 minutes of the re-start it was Derry who led.

A Gilligan free and a point from play by Eoghan Brown had the Oak Leaf level and then Gerard O'Kane stepped up to drill over two excellent points. The Glenullen man made two efforts from underneath the shadow of the stand into the River End seem almost effortless.

It was the kick Derry needed and in the final 20 minutes they did enough to hold onto their lead. Donegal twice came back to within a point, first through McBrearty and then through scoring-chief Molloy,

but Emmet McGuckin and Gilligan ensured that Derry left with the points.

As has become customary for January, there was the usual raft of changes in both teams from their previous outings.

While John Brennan showed eight changes to the side that had beaten UUU at the weekend – and coming to Ballybofey minus former All-Star Paddy Bradley who made his comeback in that game – Jim McGuinness made seven alterations to his pack.

Donegal fans had their first glimpse of Rory Kavangh in 2012 and the St Eunan's man was in the mix early, surging forward to win a free after just 20 seconds, which Dermot Molloy duly tapped over the black spot.

However, Derry soon assumed control. Caelean O'Boyle climbed high to win a ball behind Johnny Bonner and when the Donegal full-back was adjudged to have pulled the Lavey man to the floor Pdraig Hughes awarded a penalty.

Conleith Gilligan sent rookie 'keeper Michael Mullin the wrong way with a well-taken effort.

Molloy was on song for Donegal, who also had Frank McGlynn, Ryan Bradley and Patrick McBrearty in from the start. He had Donegal level with three expertly-taken points, including one free from 45 metres out, by the 20th minute with a score by Gerard O'Kane the sole Derry addition in that time.

Gilligan knocked over a free in the 23rd minute to put Derry ahead again, but it was Donegal who finished strongly in the last ten minutes of the half. McBrearty cracked over a brilliant effort after being teed up by club-mate McManus to tie things up again.

And Donegal were ahead for the first time when Molloy somehow found the target, despite appearing well off balance when stood some 40 metres from the posts. In stoppage time, Anthony Thompson, on a brief cameo in the attack, made it a two-point game, but Donegal could have been further in front.

Molloy found himself on the end of two goal chances in the opening period: the first, a low but powerfully drilled effort that Danny Devlin kept out; and the second he rifled wide deep into stoppage time after McManus did well to find the space to release the Naomh Conaill man.

Although Donegal faded in the second-half, there was plenty of food for thought for Jim McGuinness and his management team. Thomas McKinley and Declan Walsh again looked like able panel members, while there was an improved showing by McManus, who tired in the second-half before being withdrawn, and the sextet of points from Dermot Molloy were encouraging with Michael Murphy and Colm McFadden set to miss the early chapter of the League.

With Karl Lacey, Mark McHugh,

Leo McLoone and Martin McElhinney still to return to competitive outings with Donegal, the management now plot their opening assignment in the National League, away to Down on February 4th in Pairc Esler, Newry, and will look forward to the return of those players.

Donegal: Michael Mullin; Thomas McKinley, Johnny Bonner, Frank McGlynn; Anthony Thompson (0-1), Conor Classon, Declan Walsh; Rory Kavanagh, Ryan Bradley; David Walsh, Daniel McLaughlin, Marty O'Reilly; Patrick McBrearty (0-2), Dermot Molloy (0-6, 4f), Conor McManus. SUBS: Neil McGee for Bonner (half-time); Gary McFadden for McManus (42 mins); Paddy McGrath for McLaughlin (48 mins)

Derry: Danny Devlin; Brian McCallion, Philip McGlade, Colin Murray; Chrissy McKaigue, Dermot McBride, Sean Leo McGoldrick; John McCamley, Michael Bateson; Barry McGoldrick, Mark Lynch, Gerard O'Kane (0-3); Eoghan Brown (0-1), Caelean O'Boyle, Conleith Gilligan (1-3, 1pen, 2f). SUBS: James Conway for Bateson (37 mins); Emmett McGuckin (0-1) for Lynch (48 mins); Ryan Dillon for Murray (55 mins); Enda Lynn for S.L McGoldrick (69 mins); Neill Forrester for Brown (70 mins).

Referee: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh).



SFC Preliminary Round

SPORT

GAA

Cavan	1-10
Donegal	1-16

By Frank Craig
sports editor

DONEGAL have safely navigated their path towards the first round of the Ulster SFC with a competent and assured six-point victory over Cavan.

Prior to Sunday's preliminary clash, both the players and management erred on the side of caution ahead of entering the lion's den at Kingspan Breffni Park. And given the recent trauma and upheaval in Cavan, the reigning Ulster champions were venturing into an unknown of sorts on Sunday.

New boss Terry Hyland had, apparently, already slayed this dragon once previously when his U21 charges from last year came, saw and conquered Jim McGuinness' young guns at MacCumhaill Park back in 2011.

Early bird supporters filtering into the venue were even referencing both Chelsea and Leinster's huge wins in the Champions League and Heineken Cup as "good omens" and boasted that Cavan would complete the "blue weekend" with the biggest upset of the lot.

However, after weathering the hosts' early enthusiasm, which saw them lead by two just five minutes in, Donegal shifted through the gears with ease to go in at the break with six to spare on a difference of 1-7 to 0-4.

With their chief score-getter

Michael Murphy watching from the stands, Jim McGuinness' side would go on to rack up an impressive tally of 1-16 over the course of the 70 minutes, with Colm McFadden accounting for 1-6 of that.

Rory Kavanagh, on his one hundredth appearance for his county, got the visitors off to an encouraging start after Frank McGlynn had teed him up. Jack Brady tied matters up on four minutes after Jason McLaughlin did well initially to pick him out off his shoulder.

Cavan, as stated, bossed those opening exchanges and were unlucky not to have the ball in the back of the net when Brendan Fitzpatrick's lob on the stretch came back off Paul Durcan's crossbar. David Givney and Eugene Keating then both claimed huge scores from distance as Cavan went 3-1 to the good five minutes in.

But after that shaky opening from the defending Ulster champions, two scores on the bounce pushed Donegal back to level pegging. First, Colm McFadden clipped over a free on his favoured left hand side before David Walsh combined with Mark McHugh to allow the Kilcar man to punt between the posts.

Keating did manage to kick the hosts back into the lead on thirteen minutes, but from there on in, it was all Donegal as they posted 1-4 without reply to coast into the half-time break six points to the good on a difference of 1-7 to 0-4.

Neil McGee, all the way from full-back tied matters up on four apiece just after the quar-

ter hour mark before Ryan Bradley won the free that allowed McFadden to nail his second of the contest soon after.

Kavanagh, who offered up a vintage performance worthy of the occasion that was his one hundredth cap for his county, also registered point number two twenty-three minutes in. With Donegal now coming to grips with the opposition, Leo McLoone was able to open up a three-point gap despite having his man hanging out of him on the run.

And prior to the break, Donegal were given a huge chance to open up a considerable margin when Patrick McBrearty was hauled to the ground inside the square by Killian Clarke.

It was a long ball in towards Colm McFadden from Mark McHugh, which allowed McBrearty to ghost in after possession had spilled from the grasp of the big St Michael's full-forward.

The responsibility from the spot was inherited by McFadden and he made no mistake with a fine strike high and to the top right hand corner of James Reilly's net.

Half time: Cavan 0-4, Donegal 1-7.

The second-half got under way with Neil Gallagher drawing a fine stop from Reilly after the Glenswilly man found himself in space on the far right. McFadden, on forty minutes, extended Donegal's advantage out to seven before McHugh made it an eight-point game cutting in from a tight angle.

Substitute Niall McDermott finally got Cavan up and running in the second period

seven minutes in with a close range free.

But with Neill Gallagher, Kavanagh and McLoone all finding their range soon after, Donegal were already home and dry and contemplating that huge first round tussle with Derry on June 16.

Cavan were awarded a penalty of their own when McGee fouled Keating. The opposition's full-forward claimed five points from play off of last year's All-Star full-back and was the only one real attacking outlet for the Hyland's men at the weekend. McDermott finished well from the spot to slash Donegal's lead back six on a difference of 1-13 to 1-7.

Gearoid McKiernan and Keating (2) added further points from play for Cavan who, to their credit, kept going to the end. But McFadden got Donegal's last three scores to round off a good day's work for Donegal. Sure, bigger tests await but there will be plenty - good and bad

for McGuinness and his assistant Rory Gallagher mull over in the coming weeks.

Donegal: Paul; Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee (0-1), Frank McGlynn (0-1); Anthony Thompson, Karl Lacey, Declan Walsh; Rory Kavanagh (0-3), Neill Gallagher (0-1); Ryan Bradley, David Walsh, Mark McHugh (0-2); Leo McLoone (0-2), Colm McFadden (1-6, 1-0 penalty, 0-5 frees), Paddy McBrearty.

Subs: Martin O'Reilly for Bradley (24 mins), Martin McElhinney for David Walsh (66 mins), Dermot Molloy for Gallagher (69 mins).

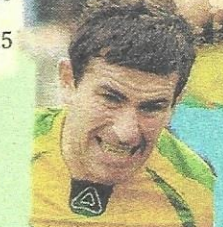
Yellow cards: Kavanagh (39 mins), David Walsh (51 mins).

Cavan: James Reilly; Killian Clarke, Padraic O'Reilly (capt), Kevin Meehan; Jason McLoughlin, Damien Reilly, Mark McKeever; David Givney (0-2), Gearoid McKiernan (0-1); Fergal Flanagan, Ronan Flanagan, Robert Moloney-Derham; Jack Brady (0-1), Eugene Keating (0-5), Brendan Fitzpatrick.

Subs: Thomas Corr for Maloney-Derham (half-time), Niall McDermott (1-1, 1-0 pen, 0-1 free) for Fitzpatrick (half-time), Niall Smith for F Flanagan (39 mins), Kevin Tierney

for McKeever (57 mins), Raymond Galligan for Brady (66 mins).

Yellow cards: Brady (25 mins), Clarke (31 mins).



Man of the Match:

Rory Kavanagh

Donegal's captain on the day put in a huge seventy minutes, which coincided with his 100th appearance for the county. He helped himself to three points and ran Gearoid McKiernan ragged from start to finish. He shades it over Neil Gallagher and Colm McFadden who banged over 1-6 up top.

Turning Point:

Donegal's spot kick just before half-time was a real blow to any hopes Cavan had of causing an upset. After an encouraging start, Donegal eventually led 7-4 three minutes from the break. However, Killian Clark's tug on Patrick McBrearty allowed McFadden to increase the deficit out to six going in at the break.

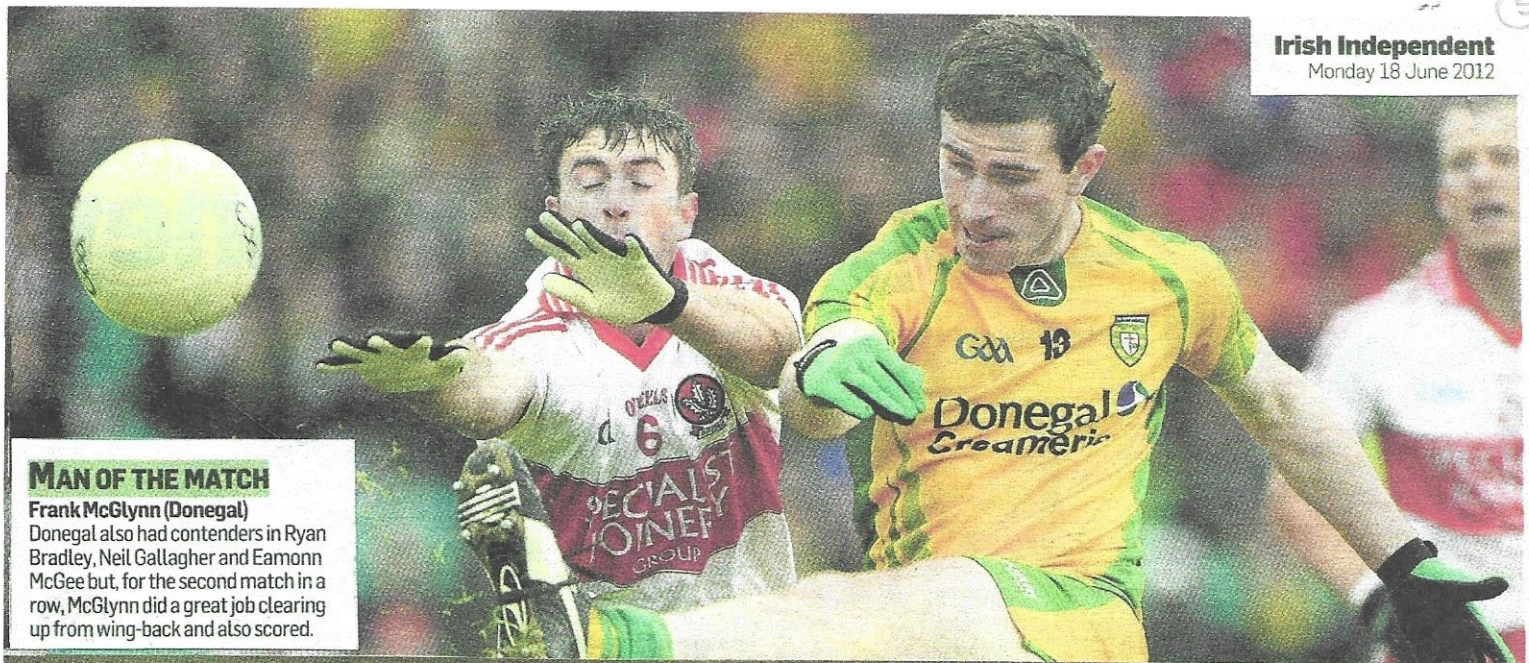
Stats:

Donegal posted just five wides throughout against Cavan's twelve. The hosts were awarded 22 frees by referee Cormac Reilly while Donegal benefited from his whistle sixteen times. Donegal picked up two yellow cards when Kavanagh and David Walsh went into the book. Indeed, many felt that Walsh was the victim of mistaken identity when the man in the middle confused him for the St Eunan's player. Another booking then would have seen Kavanagh walk which would have marred what was otherwise a great afternoon for him



Man in the Middle:

Cormac Reilly was up to speed with the action and bar that yellow card for David Walsh, didn't get much else wrong. Some argued that the tug on McBrearty happened outside the box, but with Donegal so much on top, not many blue supporters were complaining about that afterwards.



MAN OF THE MATCH

Frank McGlynn (Donegal)

Donegal also had contenders in Ryan Bradley, Neil Gallagher and Eamonn McGee but, for the second match in a row, McGlynn did a great job clearing up from wing-back and also scored.

Patrick McBrearty gets in a shot for Donegal despite the efforts of Derry's Mark Craig at MacCumhail Park, Ballybofey. OLIVER McVEIGH / SPORTSFILE



CLIONA FOLEY

Donegal's new style untested in stroll past Derry

DONEGAL	2-13
DERRY	0-9

ULSTER SFC

TWO down, two to go for Donegal as they continue a bid to make history by retaining their title for the first time.

The favourites tag always hangs nervously on them at home but the only worry about this quarter-final cakewalk in Ballybofey on Saturday was just how badly it prepared them for Tyrone next.

Anyone imagining that this rematch of last year's Ulster final might produce a few fireworks would have been disappointed by a seriously damp - literally and metaphorically - squib.

There was a detectable frisson beforehand about whether Michael Murphy would play any part after missing three months with a knee ligament injury.

When the Glenswilly star and Eamonn McGee emerged from the tunnel as the only Donegal players not wearing tracksuit tops, everyone looked even more intrigued so, when their team was eventually announced, Murphy's inclusion drew a cheer.

Jim McGuinness revealed afterwards that the player himself made the decision to start after they'd completed their warm-up on the adjacent pitch.

"He felt he was good to go and wasn't going to be putting himself under

pressure," the Donegal boss explained.

Operating deep from centre-forward, the Donegal captain grew into the game as it progressed.

And even though he clearly tired in the final quarter, McGuinness deliberately let him finish it out to get game time into his legs.

Such a liberty was possible due to the abject paucity of Derry's challenge, more of which later, but this was a game which certainly gave some insight into McGuinness' forensic managerial mindset.

Eyebrows were raised that Karl Lacey, not Neil McGee, was dispatched to mark Paddy Bradley, given how the Four Masters star likes to sally upfield.

But McGuinness reasoned that he picks "horses for courses." He felt Lacey's stature and agility were perfectly matched to Bradley, and Lacey rewarded that faith by holding his opponent to one point from play.

McGuinness held his other All Star defender in reserve to do a marking job on Eoin Bradley, correctly predicting his cameo role.

Quite what this Derry team might have done last season if they hadn't lost the younger Bradley brother to that cruciate injury before the Ulster final, we will never know.

The Glenullin man finally made his long-awaited comeback after 53 minutes on Saturday but it was probably too early for him and too late for Derry, who already trailed by 10 and were thoroughly over-run and outclassed.

Derry's only victory over Donegal this past decade came in 2008 and

though they scored a point more than they managed last year's Ulster final, this rout confirmed their problems.

Retirements haven't helped - Enda Muldoon's aerial wisdom or Kevin McCloy's bruising defensive presence would have helped here - but Derry must now find new heroes and, Chris McKaigue apart, they have few contenders.

Tactically, they tried to ape their opponents by dropping deep and playing a two-man full-forward line of Conleith Gilligan and Emmet McGuckian.

But they had neither the pace nor precision to match Donegal's speedy counter-attacking game, and seeing Paddy Bradley and Mark Lynch forced to forage so far from goal at times spoke volumes about their inability to win primary possession.

Crestfallen manager John Brennan said: "I'm trying to coach players, and have coached them these last few weeks, that style of play, but if we're not able to play up to that standard, we have to accept we're not good enough at the moment.

"We were over-run by their half-backs, midfielders and half-forwards," he conceded.

"We worked hard but there's a serious gap between ourselves and Donegal at the moment."

Exactly as they'd done to Cavan, Donegal held Derry to just 0-4 (3f) by half-time, by which time they'd racked up 1-6, the goal finished by Leo McLoone on 31 minutes after Colm McFadden had ghosted in along the end-line.

Their second goal, nine minutes after the restart, epitomised how good they can be when their mass defence immediately converts to a zippy counter-attack.

Derry midfielder Michael Friel coughed up a kick-out after being engulfed by Donegal's worker bees in midfield and, from the turnover, Patrick McBrearty, who only completed his Leaving Cert 24 hours earlier, unselfishly offloaded to an unmarked McFadden.

Paul Durcan parried Derry's only goal chance, from Lynch, in the dying stages and, as usual, Donegal's strength was the sum of their parts, with nine separate scorers.

Eamonn McGee did a big job on Lynch, Ryan Bradley deputised impressively for Rory Kavanagh in midfield, and Neil Gallagher, Frank McGlynn, David Walsh and sweeper Mark McHugh all did well.

They reigning champions are just one game away from another Ulster final now but whether they can maintain this season's more attacking style against Tyrone will be the ultimate litmus test.

SCORERS - Donegal: C McFadden 1-2 (2f), L McLoone 1-0, M Murphy 0-3 (3f), P McBrearty, D Walsh 0-2 each, F McGlynn, A Thompson, N Gallagher, R Bradley 0-1 each; Derry: P Bradley 0-6 (5f), S L McGoldrick, M Lynch 0-1 each, E Bradley 0-1 (4f).
DONEGAL - P Durcan 8, P McGrath 8, N McGee 8, K Lacey 7, A Thompson 7, E McGee 8, F McGlynn 8, R Bradley 7, N Gallagher 8, L McLoone 8, M McHugh 8, D Walsh 8, C McFadden 7, M Murphy (Capt) 7, P McBrearty 7, Subs: S Griffin for McLoone (66), D Molloy for McFadden (66), C Tovey for Bradley (68), M McElhinney for Walsh (68), A Hanton for McBrearty (69).
DERRY - B Gillis 6, E Scullion 6, C McKaigue 7, B McGoldrick 7, G O'Kane 6, M Craig 5, S L McGoldrick 7, J Diver 5, M Friel 6, J McCamley 5, M Lynch 6, E Lynn 6, C Gilligan 5, Paddy Bradley (Capt) 7, E McGuckian 5, Subs: M Donaghy 6 for McCamley (42), Patsy Bradley 7 for Lynn (45), Eoin Bradley 6 for Gilligan (53), C Kiet 6 for O'Kane (55), Emmet Bradley 6 for Diver (62).
REF - Marty Duffy (Sligo).

SPORT

Ulster Senior Football Championship semi-final

Donegal win battle of minds

PETER CAMPBELL

Sports Editor

DONEGAL0-12
TYRONE0-10

DONEGAL are safely into the Ulster final thanks to a workmanlike performance against Tyrone on Saturday night at St Tiernach's Park, Clones.

In the end they should not have relied on a magnificent stop by goalkeeper Paul Durcan after they held Tyrone at bay in the second half, keeping them scoreless for over 30 minutes.

But when he was needed Paul 'Papa' Durcan showed his class when getting his foot to Martin Penrose's goalbound shot with time almost up. It was a fitting end to what was a real game of chess between the Master (Mickey Harte) and the Young Pretender (Jim McGuinness).

For much of the game, it was a real spectacle as both sides used the blanket defence to deny scores. Tyrone will point to the five goal chances that they created and failed to take any of them. Apart from Penrose's late chance, Stephen O'Neill was denied by a crossbar midway through the second half after he nudged Eamonn McGee out of the way.

They also had a double chance in first half after 16 minutes when Joe McMahan forced his way in along the endline only to be denied by Durcan and in the follow up Mark Donnelly was denied by a brilliant block by the excellent Paddy McGrath.

Having the tag of favourites did not have any effect on Donegal as they matched Tyrone in the opening half and then their superior fitness and an extra cutting edge saw them power clear in the final quarter.

They had to do so without the steadying influence of All-Star Neil McGee, as he was forced off after just three minutes with a hamstring injury. It was learned subsequently that McGee had suffered the injury in an in-house training session earlier in the week, but the management felt that he was ready to take his place.

It's a measure of how far this Donegal panel has come under Jim McGuinness that McGee was not missed, with Declan Walsh stepping in and doing really well.

Donegal matched Tyrone point for point in the opening half with Michael Murphy impressive from frees while Patrick McBrearty also chipped in with a great point.

Tyrone had some great scores, not least from Joe McMahan and young full-back Conor Clarke and they had a point to spare at the break, 0-6 to 0-5, but they also had a number of vital misses with Peter Harte off target from a '45' and Martin Penrose missing a relatively easy free.

The second half was a much different affair with Rory Kavanagh thundering into the game to get Donegal level with two points in quick succession.

When Ryan Bradley put Donegal in front for the first time since Mark McHugh's opening point on 48 minutes, the door was open, but it was not for another 12 minutes that Donegal added to their total, Michael Murphy showing his experience in winning a free and pointing.

Colm McFadden was very instrumental in this period with a fantastic workrate, outstripping Conor Gormley on a number of occasions. The pressure being implemented by Donegal saw Tyrone 'keeper Pascal McConnell making a mistake with a kick-out and Patrick McBrearty released Karl Lacey to put Donegal 0-11 to 0-8 in front and then Colm McFadden had the point of the game as he waltzed through and fired on the run from outside the 45m line over the black spot.

The game was up for Tyrone, but true to their spirit, they never gave in and Stephen O'Neill had their first point in over 30 minutes with a minute of injury time played.

O'Neill almost got in for a goal but

was dispossessed close to goal but then came the late, late show with Martin Penrose creating an opening with a 'hop solo' but Paul Durcan was equal to his effort, deflecting the ball onto a post and it was cleared for a '45'. Before the '45' was aken Colm McFadden was shown a second yellow for trying to delay the kick and even though Conor Gormley pointed, time ran out for Tyrone.

The ending gave the crowd of 17,330 plenty to talk about, but most people leaving the ground were of the opinion that Donegal just about deserved their victory.

It was a true test for the Tironaill men and it will stand to them when they take on Down in the decider in three weeks on July 22nd.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Frank McGlynn; Eamonn McGee, Karl Lacey (0-1), Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh (0-2), Neil Gallagher; David Walsh, Ryan Bradley (0-1), Mark McHugh (0-1); Patrick McBrearty (0-1), Michael Murphy (0-3,3f), Colm McFadden (0-3,2f). Subs., Declan Walsh for N McGee 3; Martin O'Reilly for David Walsh; Martin McElhinney for Gallagher, both 55; Leo McLoone for Bradley 68; Christy Toye for McBrearty 71.



Tyrone: Pascal McConnell; Aidan, McCrory, Conor Clarke (0-1), Dermot Carlin (0-1); Ryan McMenamin, Conor Gormley (0-1,'45'), Sean O'Neill (0-1); Joe McMahan (0-2,2f), Colm Cavanagh; Mattie Donnelly, Mark Donnelly (0-1), Peter Harte; Martin Penrose (0-1), Stephen O'Neill (0-2), Owen Mulligan. Subs., Ronan McNabb for Mulligan 49; Brian McGuigan for M Donnelly 60; Aidan Cassidy for M Donnelly; Niall McKenna for McMenamin, both 64

Referee: David Coldrick (Meath).

Man of the match

Paul Durcan gets the award for his wonder save at the end. He also made a great stop in the opening half to deny Joe McMahan, but his save at the end was the reason Donegal are looking forward to a second Ulster final in-a-row.

Turning point

The period midway through the second half when Donegal came from a point down to go four clear. Colm McFadden had a purple patch in this period dominating Conor Gormley and he also hit two of those scores. It was the first time in the match that any gap appeared on the scoreboard.

Ref watch

Donegal got the rub of the green a couple of times from David Coldrick and they will have little complaints. It was a difficult game to referee but he handled it well in the circumstances.



Ulster



Final

Special



Donegal put titles back to back

PETER CAMPBELL

Sports Editor

HISTORY was made in Clones on Sunday on many fronts.

Donegal 2-18

Down..... 0-13

For the first time Donegal retained their Ulster title.

Manager Jim McGuinness remains unbeaten as a manager in the Ulster championship. So does Patrick McBrearty as a player.

Donegal became the first team to win the championship from the preliminary round on two occasions.

The final scoreline of 2-18 is Donegal's best ever return in an Ulster final. Eleven Donegal players got on the scoresheet!

It was a magnificent day and the second half performance which yielded a tally of 1-13 is certainly the best ever 35 minutes from Donegal in any championship game.

After much speculation prior to the game, both David Walsh and Neil McGee took their place in the line-out but Eamonn McGee missed out with Declan Walsh taking his place in the last line of defence.

There was a nervousness in the large band of Donegal supporters in the crowd of 34,696 at half-time as they took a one point lead to the dressing room. They hadn't performed

anywhere near their true worth in the opening half and in all honesty were flattered to be a point ahead.

Down had created many openings in that first period and but for some very poor shooting which included seven wides, the Mourne men would have been at least two or three points ahead at the break.

But once Donegal got the wind at their backs, they threw off their inhibitions and they tore into Down, whose heads had gone down long before the end when Colm McFadden finished things off with a rare right footed point.

For long periods of the opening half, the contest was just a case of cat and mouse. For the opening 23 minutes only four points were shared. Ryan Bradley had opened Donegal's account; Liam Doyle responded while Patrick McBrearty added a second for Donegal and Donal O'Hare drove over from close range.

Down were threatening the Donegal goal with their direct running, but it was Donegal who had the best goal chance on 22 minutes when Mc-

utes to the half Declan Walsh came forward on two occasions and hit points either side of a David Walsh score, while Kevin McKernan had one for Down.

After witnessing five points in the opening 23 minutes, the supporters witnessed a thrilling final seven minutes to the half which Donegal won 1-3 to 0-4.

Half-time: Donegal 1-5, Down 0-7.

Conor Laverty, who was given little room to shine by Paddy McGrath, levelled matters within 45 seconds of the Brearty and McFadden sent Anthony Thompson into space, but he rushed his shot and blazed wide.

Down edged two clear through Doyle and O'Hare frees before Donegal's go-to man for much of this game, Ryan Bradley intervened again, winning a Durcan kick-out and finding Leo McLoone in space and the Naomh Co-naill man showed composure to slide the ball to the net.

Ambrose Rogers, outstanding for the Mourne men in the opening half, levelled and Liam Doyle edged them ahead. But in a frantic last few min-

restart, but in a three minute period points from Colm McFadden, Michael Murphy and Mark McHugh opened a significant gap of three points.

Liam Doyle and Martin McElhinney exchanged points before Eoin McCartan reduced the margin to two with 48 minutes gone.

Then came the significant scores of the half on 49 and 50 minutes. Firstly an interception in the Donegal defence saw Frank McGlynn on a forward run and he found Mark McHugh thundering through to score. McGlynn took a knock in delivering the pass and was still up front when the ball came back from the kick-out to Michael Murphy and he slipped the ball to the Glenfin man, who made no mistake from 20m to seal the game for Donegal - 2-10 to 0-10.!

Donegal kicked on as Down's heads began to drop and Colm McFadden put on a scoring display in the final quarter, hitting five points while Ryan Bradley, Daniel McLaughlin and Martin McElhinney also got their names on the scoresheet.

Down added a few points and Daniel Hughes drew a great save from Paul Durcan on 68 minutes, but there was only token resistance from the men in red and black in that final quarter.

Donegal were simply magnificent. Again it was a real team effort and the joy at the final whistle in retaining the title was just as good as it was a year earlier when the gap from 1992 had been bridged.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Declan Walsh (0-2); Frank McGlynn (1-0), Karl Lacey, Anthony Thompson; Ryan Bradley (0-2), Rory Kavanagh; David Walsh, (0-1), Leo McLoone (1-0), Mark McHugh (0-2); Patrick McBrearty (0-1), Michael Murphy (0-1), Colm McFadden (0-6, 3f). Subs., Martin McElhinney (0-2) for David Walsh ht; Christy Toye for McLoone 43; Daniel McLaughlin (0-1) for Bradley 58.

Down: Brendan McVeigh; Daniel McCartan, Brendan McArdle, Darren O'Hagan; Aidan Carr, Dan Gordon, Aiden Branagan (0-1); Ambrose Rogers (0-1), Kevin McKernan (0-1); Donal O'Hare (0-2,1f), Mark Poland, Liam Doyle (0-4,2f); Brendan Coulter, Kalum King, Conor Laverty (0-1). Subs., Eoin McCartan (0-1) for Coulter ht; Conor Maginn (0-1) for A Carr 42; Danny Hughes (0-1) for O'Hare 48; Benny Coulter for McKernan 54.

Referee: Joe McQuillan (Cavan)

Man of the match

It is a really tough decision with three Donegal players vying for the award - Ryan Bradley, Frank McGlynn and Mark McHugh. All three were magnificent in different ways in this contest, but when Donegal really needed leadership it was Bradley who stepped up to the mark and he just edges the award. Apart from scoring the goal, McGlynn was involved in numerous Donegal scores, while McHugh gave a faultless display and also hit two points.

Donegal eyes on the big prize

McFadden twists knife as curtain falls on illustrious Kingdom era



COLM KEYS

DONEGAL 1-12
KERRY 1-10

ALL-IRELAND SFC QUARTER-FINAL

JUST when they thought they had dealt with one northern nemesis, another has emerged to spook a weary Kingdom.

Donegal and Kerry will probably never develop into the same long-distance rivalry, however, that has framed Tyrone and the Kingdom for the last decade, because Kerry won't have the resources or, perhaps even the will, to chase this one down.

Two weeks on from the therapy of a championship victory over Tyrone, that result can now be seen for what it was, a nod to the past, not a means to a more vibrant future.

Ultimately, Donegal outfought, out-thought and outran Kerry in their first ever championship meeting, just as they had privately felt they could do. A two-point margin of victory at the end didn't do justice to their dominance, their ability to control the game for long patches.

Credit Kerry for the manner of their comeback over the last seven minutes, as they rescued a perilous situation and restored some respectability.

But it was small consolation on an afternoon where, if the music hasn't died completely, then it has become barely audible for this team. It won't be the same again for them.

Donegal had surged into a 1-11 to 0-8 lead when Colm McFadden pointed a free on 64 minutes. But Kerry got the opening they craved, Donnacha Walsh teeing up Kieran Donaghy to bat home a goal at close range.

That lifted Kerry out of their slumber as Paul Galvin and Anthony Maher dragged them closer with subsequent points, but the measure of this maturing Donegal team is how they responded next.

Rory Kavanagh, a hugely industrious presence throughout, took possession from a Donegal kick-out and fed Karl Lacey on the burst. With Kerry numbers committed to attack, Lacey surged clear and popped an insurance point to close the deal.

That Lacey should be so full of running in the 71st minute of a game of such intensity is testament to the staying power of this Donegal team. He was immense throughout that second half.

They will be hard to stop, even for a team as talented and as powerful as Cork.

The growing confidence Donegal have in the game plan they have committed to over the last 19 months is reflected in the greater numbers they now commit to attack.

Their style may not please every eye, but you can't argue with the quality of their last score before half-time, started by Mark McHugh in the shadow of his own goalposts and finished within seconds at the other end by Leo McLoone.

ENDURANCE

The pace and endurance required for the sequence of transfers was most impressive.

McHugh is now Donegal's pivotal player, the man whose role has now done most to develop their game for 2011.

He worked well as a sweeper around the McGee brothers, who were tasked with minding Donaghy and Colm Cooper, but it was the young Kilar man's playmaking from those deep positions that really stood out.

It was an attritional day for Kerry. Eoin Brosnan limped out of the action after only 24 minutes, Bryan Sheehan was struggling before half-time with an injury and played on until the 45th minute when he had to depart. He was joined by Declan O'Sullivan in a double substitution that had to have lifted Donegal.

O'Sullivan, Jack O'Connor explained afterwards, had run out of steam at that point and Jack knows his club colleague better than most.

But it was still a curious substitution. With the high ball into Donaghy not reaping any real dividend, would it not have been better to station him closer to goals for a spell and possibly release Cooper?

But losing Sheehan and calling in O'Sullivan was a pivotal moment of the game, a time when you sensed options were quickly running out for Kerry and that belief would subsequently drain from them. It was one scrap too many.

At that point Donegal led by 1-6 to 0-7. They won the next 20 minute

period by 0-5 to 0-1 before Donaghy got the goal and, if this game has a snapshot, it was the manner in which Frank McGlynn got down to block Galvin to concede a '45', which was subsequently missed.

It had been billed as a game that would 'fascinate' more than entertain and that's how it panned out.

A cynical first half, laced with so many deliberate fouls that killed momentum on both sides, gave way to a more free-flowing third quarter as Donegal sought to build on a 1-4 to 0-5 interval lead.

Both sides committed big numbers to defence when they didn't have possession, with Kerry regularly deploying up to 11 players inside their own half to screen Donegal's strike runners.

It led to very few goal chances and, indeed, it required something freakish for Donegal to establish control through a Colm McFadden goal.

His sixth-minute sideline deceived Brendan Kealy, who had the distraction of Aidan O'Mahony and Michael

Murphy wrestling each other in front of him, and it provided an advantage, 1-1 to 0-1, which Donegal didn't subsequently relinquish.

In what was inevitably going to be a low scoring affair it was a very significant break.

EXCEPTIONAL

Donegal had some exceptional defensive performances, none more so than from Paddy McGrath, but the drivers were McHugh, Ryan Bradley, Paddy McBrearty, Kavanagh and Lacey, who repeatedly broke tackles and overlapped to eventually squeeze their illustrious opponents into near submission.

The polish of McFadden's finishing was the last critical element as he added to what had already been his best-ever season in a long Donegal career.

From an early stage, it was clear that space would be at a premium for Kerry's gifted forwards.

Cooper got clear on one occasion just before the break. He linked with Donaghy and had goal clearly on his mind, but, in the end, had to settle for a fist-ed point in added time at the end of the first half and that was as close as he got.

It is a wonderful coaching achievement for Jim McGuinness to have taken this team to a second successive All-Ireland semi-final, courtesy of back-to-back Ulster titles.

That a player like Michael Murphy is willing to sacrifice the finer points of his game to contribute to the communal effort underlines the journey they are on.

In the cold light of day, however, they will realise that they have beaten a Kerry team for whom the light is fading fast.

SCORERS - Donegal: C McFadden 1-6 (1-0 s.1, 0-2f), M Murphy 0-3 (2f), C Toye, L McLoone, K Lacey all 0-1 each. Kerry: C Cooper 0-4 (2f), K Donaghy 1-0, A Maher 0-2, B Sheehan (f), P Galvin, Declan O'Sullivan, J O'Donoghue all 0-1 each.

DONEGAL - P Durcan; 7; E McGee 6, N McGee 7, P McGrath 7; F McGlynn 7, K Lacey 8, A Thompson 8; McMcElhinney 5, R Kavanagh 8; P McBrearty 7, M McHugh 8, R Bradley 7; C McFadden 8, M Murphy 7, L McLoone 6. **Subs:** N Gallagher for McElhinney (h-t), David Walsh for Bradley (59), D McLaughlin for McBrearty (71).
KERRY - B Kealy 5; M O Se 6, A O'Mahony 7, S Enright 6; T O Se 8, E Brosnan 5, K Young 5; A Maher 7, B Sheehan 5; P Galvin 6, Declan O'Sullivan 5, D Walsh 7; J O'Donoghue 5, C Cooper 7, K Donaghy 8. **Subs:** B McGuire 6 for Brosnan (24), Darran O'Sullivan 6 for Young (32), J Buckley 5 for Sheehan (45), K O'Leary 4 for Declan O'Sullivan (45), P Curtin 4 for O'Donoghue (45).
REF - Marty Duffv (Sligo)

ALL-IRELAND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

Donegal's day

PETER CAMPBELL

Sports Editor

Donegal0-16

Cork1-11

WHEN you beat Cork and Kerry you deserve to be in an All-Ireland final and Donegal annihilated Cork by two points yesterday in Croke Park.

The scenes of jubilation as Jim McGuinness led Donegal back to the promised land of an All-Ireland final were a joy to behold.

The game plan was again played out to the full as Karl Lacey and Neil Gallagher led by example in what can only be described as the best ever display from a Donegal team.

Karl Lacey was playing his 100th game for the county and he marked it with one of his finest displays ever in the green and gold. He was about to break into song, 'Jimmy's winning matches' as he was presented with an award to mark the occasion at the end of the game in the middle of the pitch.

He was closely followed in a great all-round team display by Neil Gallagher, who gave a display of fielding that will not be forgotten all around the country for a long time.

The win was again predicated on being very tight in the opening half and then closing out the game in the second period and but for some poor shooting and the concession of a late, late goal, the margin of victory would and should have been closer to ten points.

Two changes

Cork had two changes to their selected team with Ciaran Sheehan and Daniel Goulding replacing Ray Carey and Nicholas Murphy.

It was a rip roaring first half, probably one of the best ever seen in Croke Park with the sides level on seven occasions before Mark McHugh fisted Donegal in front for the fourth time in the half. Indeed McHugh had Colm McFadden free inside him as he was set free by Karl Lacey but elected to take his point.

Even the supporters were ready for the half-time break at the end of an all-action 35 minutes with both sides going at full throttle.

Donegal were in front inside two minutes with Michael Murphy punishing a foul on himself by Eoin Cadigan. The tussle between Murphy and Cadogan was one of the highlights of the game with the first half ending even.

Cork hit back with Paul Kerrigan, who along with Ciaran Sheehan, carried the biggest threat, levelling and Patrick Kelly punished a poor kick-out to put Cork in front.

But Donegal hit back with Patrick McBrearty selling Noel O'Leary a great dummy before being fouled and Colm McFadden lofted the free over the bar.

By the 11th minute Donegal were back in front as Anthony Thompson found Murphy with a great ball and he laid it off for McFadden to lob over.

Daniel Goulding levelled after Donncha O'Connor won a free of Ryan Bradley but with Donegal playing their three inside forwards inside the 20m line, they won another

free, with McBrearty again outfoxing O'Leary and Murphy fired over.

Ciaran Sheehan levelled after a great run around the Donegal defence, fisting over but Rory Kavanagh showed a similar turn of foot at the other end, driving through and hitting a great point.

But the nature of the half was underlined two minutes later as Colm O'Neill pointed twice inside two minutes, both created by Paul Kerrigan, to push Cork 0-6 to 0-5 ahead.

But Neil Gallagher, who was immense at midfield, won the kick-out and set Karl Lacey clear to level once more.

Ciaran Sheehan got his second Cork point but David Walsh, just on the field, got on the end of a move involving Mark McHugh and Anthony Thompson, to level for the seventh time.

Then came the late McHugh effort to send Donegal to the dressing room ahead by the minimum.

Half-time: Donegal 0-8, Cork 0-7

The usual Donegal push came early in the second half as Colm McFadden was on the end of a McHugh-Murphy set up and Frank McGlynn then punished after David Walsh effected another turnover.

Adrian Walsh replied with a long distance effort but Donegal came surging forward and Rory Kavanagh was denied a goal by Alan Quirke but Anthony Thompson followed up to point and open a four point gap.

Ciaran Sheehan had another long range effort for Cork before McHugh and Murphy again combined and when Murphy was fouled, McFadden pointed the free. It was followed in the 49th minute but a Murphy free from fully 52m.

The writing was on the wall but Paul Kerrigan struck from well outside the 45m but Donegal kept responding with a Colm McFadden 45.

Colm O'Neill's point was cancelled by a Martin McElhinney effort with four minutes left. As Cork came looking for a goal, Aidan Walsh was denied by a great block from Anthony Thompson before David Walsh lost possession in midfield and Colm O'Neill found space behind the Donegal defence to fire home a goal.

But there was no denying Donegal. They had done more than enough and referee David Coldrick's final whistle was greeted by an outpouring on the sideline and in the stands.

It was a day to remember. Now for the Dubs or Mayo!

Apart from the two outstanding displays from Lacey and Gallagher; Anthony Thompson and Rory

Kavanagh gave everything they had; the names Mark McHugh and Michael Murphy were involved in many scores; Colm McFadden again rose to the challenge.

But then you could go right through the team. Nine different scorers tells its own story.

Scorers - Donegal: Colm McFadden 0-5,2f,45; Michael Murphy 0-3,3f; Karl Lacey 0-2; Frank McGlynn, Anthony Thompson, Rory Kavanagh, Mark McHugh, David Walsh, Martin McElhinney 0-1 each.

Cork: Colm O'Neill 1-3; Ciaran Sheehan 0-3; Paul Kerrigan 0-2; Aidan Walsh (f), Patrick Kelly, Daniel Goulding (f) 0-1 each.

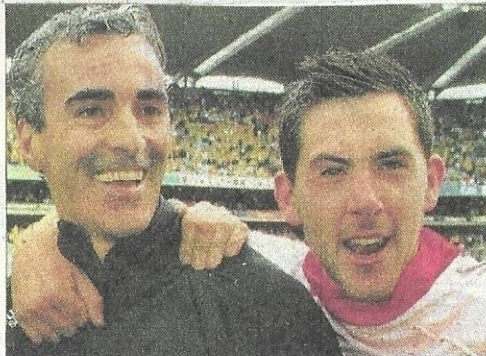
Donegal: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Frank McGlynn, Karl Lacey, Anthony Thompson; Neil Gallagher,

Rory Kavanagh; Ryan Bradley, Leo McLoone, Mark McHugh; Patrick McBrearty, Michael Murphy, Colm McFadden. Subs., David Walsh for Bradley 29; Martin McElhinney for Kavanagh 58; Declan Walsh for McGlynn 68; Daniel McLaughlin for McBrearty; Christy Toyne for McFadden, both 71.

Cork: Alan Quirke; Noel O'Leary, Michael Shields, Eoin Cadigan;

Paudie Kissane, Graham Cauty, Fintan Goold; Alan O'Connor; Aidan Walsh; Ciaran Sheehan, Patrick Kelly, Paul Kerrigan; Colm O'Neill, Donncha O'Connor, Nicholas Murphy. Subs., Pearse O'Neill for Goold 47; Denis O'Sullivan for A O'Connor 47; Nicholas Murphy for D O'Connor 55

Referee: David Coldrick (Meath)



Thunderous early goal sets tone as McGuinness' men get hands on Sam and heap misery on Mayo



**MARTIN
BREHENY**

DONEGAL 2-11

MAYO 0-13

ALL-IRELAND SFC FINAL

THE DONEGAL project has been completed - for the present at least.

Jim McGuinness will no doubt launch a new one over the next few months but for now the manager, his squad and the whole of Donegal can bask in the warm glow generated by an All-Ireland triumph that was constructed so painstakingly over the past two years.

The climb started from a very low base after Donegal exited the 2010 championship with barely a whimper of defiance against Armagh in an All-Ireland qualifier.

McGuinness' appointment as manager some weeks later raised hopes of an upward graph, but nobody could have foreseen that by September 2012, Donegal would be double Ulster champions and, even more importantly, that Sam Maguire would be on his way to the north-west for only the second time in championship history.

FAMOUS

The famous trophy will undertake that journey today after Donegal locked Mayo back into the house of pain in an All-Ireland final where the agenda was set early on. Fortunately for Donegal, they were the trend-setters, hitting Mayo for 2-1 in the first 11 minutes.

Seven-point leads are rarely wiped out in All-Ireland football finals and while Mayo did their best to make amends for the early defensive frailties, the workload proved too much.

They had deducted four points from the deficit by half-time to trail by three (2-4 to 0-7) but that was as good as it got for the Connacht champions, who lost the second half by 0-7 to 0-6.

Two phases will come under close scrutiny when Mayo begin yet another painful post All-Ireland debrief. The opening 15 minutes of the first half was a total mess for Mayo whose attempt to end the 61-year wait for a fourth All-Ireland title was all but wrecked by sloppy defending.

The first 10 minutes of the second half was also hugely influential as shot by Patrick McBrearty had hit the post and the ball had squirted away from Mayo defender Kevin Keane.

It was a cruel break for Mayo who had justifiable grounds for feeling hard done by just before Donegal broke upfield and scored that precious goal. Cillian O'Connor appeared to have been fouled as he bore

DONEGAL - P Durcan, P McGrath, N McGee, F McGlynn, E McGee, K Lacey, A Thompson, N Gallagher, R Kavanagh, M McHugh, L McLoone, R Bradley, P McBrearty, M Murphy, C McFadden. **Subs:** D Walsh for Bradley (41), M McElhinney for McBrearty (48), C Toye for McLoone (57), D Molloy for McElhinney (72).
MAYO - D Clarke, K Keane, G Caffrey, K Higgins, L Keegan, D Vaughan, C Boyle, B Moran, A O'Shea, K McLoughlin, J Doherty, A Dillon, E Varley, C O'Connor, M Conroy. **Subs:** A Freeman for Doherty (50), J Gibbons or Conroy (59), R Feeney for Varley (61), S O'Shea for Moran (70).
REF - M Deegan (Laois).

Mayo kicked three wides from good chances at a time when they trailed by four points. Those two periods won't make for pretty viewing when James Horan revisits a DVD that's certain to warm many a cold night in Donegal this winter.

Michael Murphy's thundering goal in the third minute, scored after he collected an accurate delivery from marauding centre-back Karl Lacey was a hugely stabilising agent for Donegal and there was more to come eight minutes later when Colm McFadden hit their second goal.

He had pointed a free in between but it was his goal which really electrified Donegal's effort. It was an opportunist finish after a

down on the Donegal goal, but referee Maurice Deegan saw it differently, much to Mayo's disappointment.

Donegal would have had a third goal in the 13th minute but for a brilliant save by David Clarke from a McFadden shot. At that stage it really did look as if Mayo were headed for a defeat of 2006 proportions (they lost heavily to Kerry) but, to their credit, they arrested the slide and settled into rhythm which asked real questions of Donegal.

Aidan O'Shea and Barry Moran improved their take around midfield, Kevin McLoughlin began making progress down the right and with Donegal's error count rising, Mayo gradually worked their way back into contention. They out-scored Donegal by 0-5 to 0-1 over the final 15 minutes of the first half in a haul that included two inspiring points from Michael Conroy and Enda Varley.

Kicked under enormous pressure, they were the type of scores which would have left Mayo quite confident of completing the recovery in the second half.

However, it was vital for them to start the second half in the same positive vein they closed out the opening period, but it was Donegal who made the early breaks with points from McFadden (free) and Frank McGlynn, separated by one from an O'Connor free.

McGlynn's point summed up the maturity that Donegal bring to their game nowadays.

The attack-minded corner-back had a chance to shoot from a reasonably good position but



thought better of it, opting instead to continue the move with another pass which enabled

Donegal to work - closer to the Mayo goal.

McGlynn was still in

the vicinity when the next shooting opportunity arose and he fired over the bar to take his championship return this season to 1-4, quite a contribution from a No 4.

Trailing by four points after 40 minutes, Mayo were about to enter a phase which cost them dearly. Three times in five minutes they had scoreable shots at goal but Barry Moran, Varley (free) and Conroy shot wide.

It meant that Donegal emerged from one of their shakiest periods with a four-point lead which they extended to five when Michael Murphy, who played a captain's part in the success, pointed a free in the 47th minute.

The sides exchanged two points each, over the next 10 minutes taking them into the final 10 minutes with Donegal leading by 2-9 to 0-10. By then, Mayo had replaced three of their starting forwards and despatched Aidan O'Shea to full-forward in an effort to prise a goal opening.

However, with the Donegal defence at its vigilant best, Mayo found it very

difficult to open the approach routes to Paul Durcan's goal. They had one late chance but sub Seamus O'Shea had his effort blocked.

It was to be Mayo's final flourish and Donegal protected their four-point lead to the end to ensure a thoroughly deserved victory.

It was their 12th win in 13 championship games since May 2011, a period in which their development as a team has been quite remarkable. For all that, they would have surprised at how easy they found it to unlock the Mayo defence early on.

It was generally expected that the opening 15 minutes would be a low-scoring, tentative period during which both sides majored in defence.

Instead, Mayo were uncharacteristically loose, allowing Donegal to unload accurate passes and also getting caught in too many one-on-one situations when extra cover was an essential.

Still, credit to Murphy for the manner in which he finished that early goal. He might have taken the safer option of a point, but instead he opted to trust himself and was richly rewarded as his rocket flew past Clarke.

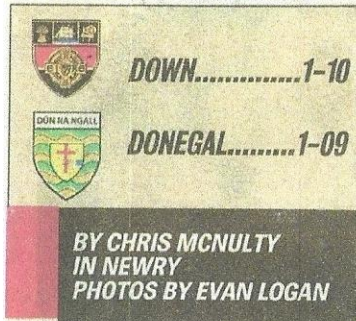
It set the tone for a golden Donegal period that ultimately won the game. For while Mayo battled back bravely, they were always playing a chasing game.

And, as so many other opponents have discovered, reining in Donegal once they open a lead is a very difficult task, one which proved beyond Mayo's reach on a day when, once again, their application to rejoin the All-Ireland club was rejected.

SCORERS - Donegal: M Murphy (0-3f), C McFadden (0-3f) 1-4 each, R Bradley F McGlynn, N Gallagher 0-1 each. Mayo: C O'Connor 0-5 (5f), K McLoughlin, E Varley (1f) 0-2 each, M Conroy, R Feeney, L Keegan, J Gibbons 0-1 each.

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Late misses costly for Donegal



DONEGAL were left to curse a couple of late misses in Newry on Saturday night as they fell to defeat to Down in the Division 1 League opener at Páirc Esler.

Liam Doyle's early goal helped give the Mournemen the edge on the night, but Donegal passed up two late chances to snatch a draw.

Goalkeeper Paul Durcan, having missed a first-half free, was summarised from his goal to take an injury-time '45, but the big Four Masters man's effort tailed well to the right and wide.

Dermot Molloy then pulled a free past the right-hand post. With the tried and trusted place kickers, Michael Murphy and Colm McFadden, sidelined with injuries, Donegal were disappointed not to have taken those chances to secure a point.

"Decision making in the last ten minutes let us down," said frustrated Donegal manager Jim McGuinness.

"We had chances for a couple of handy tap overs, but we didn't take them. At the same time, we're back in Division 1 and these are young players who are learning all the time.

"With Michael and Colm not here tonight it was a chance for the younger boys to put their best foot forward"

"We had chances in the last 15 and if we'd held our composure we'd at least have got a draw out of it.

"With five minutes to go we'd have taken a draw. It's tough to take. It's our first night back in Division 1 and a draw - like we got in the first game of the League last year - would have been a good result to take back."

Martin McElhinney has been making lots of headlines lately, but the man in the centre of the Jim McGuinness-Niall Moyna spat looked to have given Donegal a foothold with a 51st minute goal. The St Michael's man, who was kept in reserve having been named to start, drilled home to put Donegal ahead for the first time in a game in which they hadn't, until then, been able to get close enough to Down, who held sway thanks to Doyle's cracking goal.

The missed opportunities proved costly for the visitors, who are still searching for a first competitive win of 2012. They could well have bagged that on Saturday night, but counted the cost of eight wides and two efforts that landed in the arms of Brendan McVeigh.

They lacked a fluidity a lot of the time, but still had their chances against a Down team that was also under-strength with McCartan down an entire defence. From their own kickouts Donegal gave away a lot of possession, but Rory Kavanagh and Neil Gallagher did win their share of McVeigh's distributions.

Both teams adopted a defensive-based template with Donegal having

McBrearty and Griffin as their uppermost duo. How Murphy would have craved some of the darts that were thrust into the bullseye on Saturday night.

Eleven of the team that started the August All-Ireland semi-final with Dublin started on Saturday night. There was a welcome return to competitive action for Karl Lacey, while young MacCumhail's starlet Martin O'Reilly gave a lively and encouraging display when brought on at half-time.

Conor Classon was favoured to Martin McElhinney from the start, but the Ardara man was replaced by McElhinney in the first-half after finding the going tough.

Donegal as a whole found the going tough in the early stages. They were stunned in the seventh minute when their hosts stole in for a goal, centre half-back Liam Doyle defying the number 6 on his back with the sweetest of finishes, cracking into the top corner of Durcan's goal.

A score by wing-back Aidan Brannigan after just 26 seconds had set the tone while Benny Coulter and Doyle (free) had given Down an early foothold that was strengthened considerably by Doyle's goal - which came after a Griffin free had got Donegal off the mark.

Donegal's response to the set-back was good, Mark McHugh chalking off two points before a McBrearty free pulled them back to within two.

The arrears remained at two by the interval. Karl Lacey got up for a splendid point and McBrearty knocked over a second free, but a magnificent long-range effort by Doyle and a free from Aidan Carr

gave Down a 1-5 to 0-6 advantage.

Griffin (free) and Anthony Thompson had Donegal to within a point ten minutes into the second-half, with Dan Gordon slotting over a well-worked Down score.

The pendulum swung on 51 minutes. Sub O'Reilly fed Neil Gallagher in the danger zone and the big man off-loaded to McElhinney, who coolly finished to the net from close-range. That turned the tide to put Donegal two up, but they lost their way again thereafter.

Down hit four in a row, with the highly-influential Doyle grabbing two of those.

Dermot Molloy teed up the big finale with a point three minutes from the end, but Donegal kicked away their chance of getting a share of the spoils - and, for now, remain empty handed. They'll aim to alter that slide on Sunday when Laois are welcomed to Letterkenny, but look likely to be without Martin McElhinney for that fixture after he was helped off in added-on time after going over on his ankle.

Down: Brendan McVeigh; Owen Costello, Daniel McCartan, Keith Quinn; Aidan Brannigan (0-2), Liam Doyle (1-4, 3f), Damian Turley; Peter Turley, Dan Gordon (0-1); Gerard McCartan, Aidan Carr (0-1, 1f), Mark Poland; Marcus Miskelly, Conor Laverty, Benny Coulter (0-1). **SUBS:** Ryan Brady for Miskelly (33 mins); Conor Garvey (0-1) for Costello (51 mins); Niall McParland for Quinn (54 mins); Ambrose Rogers for Brannigan (54 mins); Eoin McCartan for Poland (69 mins).

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Paddy McGrath; Anthony Thompson (0-1), Karl Lacey (0-1), Leo McLoone; Conor Classon, Neil Gallagher; Rory Kavanagh, Mark McHugh (0-2), Ryan Bradley; Patrick McBrearty (0-2, 2f), Stephen Griffin (0-2, 1f), David

Walsh. **SUBS:** Martin McElhinney for Classon (25 mins); Martin O'Reilly for Walsh (half time); Dermot Molloy (0-1) for Griffin (51 mins); Adrian Hanlon for McLoone (67 mins).

Referee: Joe McQuillan (Cavan).

TERRACE TALK

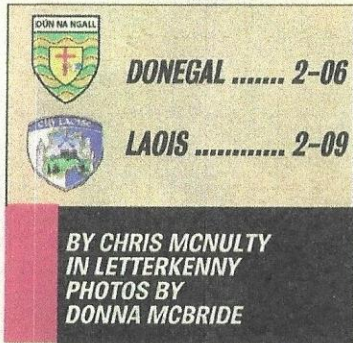
In the absence of Michael Murphy, their reliable right-footed free taker, it was notable that Paul Durcan attempted a Stephen Cluxton with two placed kick efforts. However, the big Four Masters goalkeeper was off-cue with a first-half free and then a late '45 that could have snatched a draw.

Match Stats

DOWN/DONEGAL

Goals	1/1
Points	10/9
Wides	5/8
45s	0/1
Frees awarded	31/20
Frees scored	4/3
Short efforts	5/2
Yellow cards	2/3
Red cards	0/0
Attendance	3,000

Goals take bad look off things for Donegal



It helped spur a reaction from Donegal - one that almost led to an unlikely and, what would have been a scarcely-deserved comeback too.

Just sixty seconds later, big Neil Gallagher powered to the net after Lillis had let Patrick McBrearty's pass slip through his hands.

Gallagher started on the edge of the square yesterday for Donegal, with Rory Kavanagh and Ryan Bradley at centrefield.

The big Glenswilly man was a peripheral figure inside however, as Donegal didn't launch near enough darts his way and he was more effective when around his natural habitat in the middle third.

Thrown in again for a late salvo, Gallagher scored the second Donegal goal, but Laois deserved their win and for Donegal there are worrying signs and plenty of issues for McGuinness to address over the next three weeks.

The next series of matches see Donegal out four weeks running with opposition in the form of the 2010 All-Ireland winners Cork, and the other three semi-finalists from last year, Kerry, Mayo and Dublin, hardly providing feet-up exercises.

Indeed, Donegal will go into those games without a win in six competitive outings and on the back of their poorest display of the McGuinness

DO NOT be fooled by the score-line: The three-point margin of victory does something of a disservice to Laois, who upset the odds by scoring a deserved win over a disjointed Donegal at O'Donnell Park.

Two goals in as many minutes in a manic period of the second-half from Anthony Thompson and Neil Gallagher placed a little gloss on the scoreline from a Donegal perspective.

In truth, Donegal weren't close to Justin McNulty's men for most of the game and it would have been an injustice to the O'Moore men had Donegal managed to salvage something from the embers which burned so intently throughout the second-half.

Anthony Thompson had a shot blocked by Kieran Lillis in the 62nd minute and while the Laois full-back cleared from his goal-line referee Michael Duffy, after consulting with the umpires, gave the goal.

Match Stats

DONEGAL/LAOIS

Goals	2/2
Points	6/9
Wides	8/8
45s	1/0
Frees awarded	22/29
Frees scored	2/1
Short efforts	4/2
Yellow cards	4/2
Red cards	0/0
Attendance	3,500
(approx)	

reign - making the return of those absent stars so important with yesterday's outing only enhancing their importance to the cause.

Patrick McBrearty shot four first-half points, but Donegal carried the poor decision making that cost dearly last weekend against Down into the game, with Laois punishing some poor turnovers in possession and the home side not utilising near enough the soaring figure of Gallagher close to the Laois goal.

For all that was wrong about their display they were still only two in arrears when a game-changing incident saw Duffy penalise Lacey for a foul on Paul Cahillane.

From the penalty, Cahillane sent Durcan the wrong way, his goal mak-

ing it a five-point game at the break.

Donegal went 26 second-half minutes without registering and their mini purple patch was over as quick as it had started with Laois chalking up a win that alters, for Donegal's survival hopes, quite significantly the importance of collecting points against the big guns.

This clash of the two promoted sides also brought together two counties coming off the back of opening day defeats, Donegal having lost in Down and Laois after being shot down by Mayo last Saturday night.

While the League might still be at an embryonic stage, it might not have been over the top to suggest that yesterday's was a must-win clash for Jim McGuinness's side.

In the quest for survival on the top rung of the League, that the next four games are against Cork, Kerry, Mayo and Dublin (the 2010 All-Ireland champions and the other three semi-finalists of last year) meant that points yesterday were vital.

With that in mind, McGuinness rang the changes in a misfiring attack from Newry with Martin O'Reilly, Dermot Molloy and Adrian Hanlon all elevated into the starting line-up in a bid to ignite the sparks, with Conor Classon, David Walsh and Stephen Griffin the men to miss out as Neil Gallagher was started at full-forward. Laois were the brighter starters with Ross Munnely atoning for an early missed free when he

popped two stylish points to give the Leinster side a cushion.

Patrick McBrearty got Donegal off the board in the 15th minute and a free from the Kilcar teen levelled it up in the 20th minute, but Donegal taking the wrong option was becoming a worryingly regular feature.

Laois hit four of the next five scores, through, Conway (2), Munnely and Clancy to go three in front.

McBrearty was Donegal's sole marksman in the opening 35 minutes, which ended with Cahillane stroking home a penalty that fired Laois into a 1-6 to 0-4 lead.

Donegal failed to score in the first 26 minutes of part two. In that time Laois effectively sewed up the points. The big score came from Clancy, who had give Donegal no end of problems with his huge frame imposing hard on a troubled rearguard.

The big Timahoe clubman fetched high above McGee and Durcan before finishing with ease from close range.

Eleven down, there appeared no way back for Donegal. Lady luck intervened and when Thompson's shot, after Neil McGee was denied by Culliton, was blocked in a crowded goalmouth the officials conferred before finally awarding the goal.

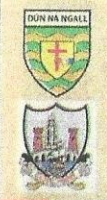
And there was barely time to discuss that when Gallagher profited from Lillis' hesitation when he rifled past the 'keeper from close range. Laois missed a chance to put four be-

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Murphy returns to fire Donegal to victory

Referee: Paudie O'Sullivan (Kerry)

Attendance 1,500



DONEGAL.....1-07
CORK.....0-06

**BY CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY
PHOTOS BY EVAN LOGAN**

MICHAEL Murphy's worth to Donegal football didn't take long to shine through yesterday on the captain's first appearance of the year - all of 12 seconds in fact.

Possession was won from the throw-in by Neil Gallagher and the ball was quickly worked to Karl Lacey, whose pin-point delivery was fetched by Murphy. And the powerful full-forward profited from a slip by full-back Eoin O'Mahony to blast to the net.

It was some start for a player who hadn't kicked a competitive ball in the county colours since the All-Ireland semi-final in August. It was no coincidence that his return resulted in Donegal chalking off a first win of 2012, keeping reigning Division 1 holders Cork scoreless for the final half-hour.

But the story belonged to Murphy, whose brilliance was showcased again with an all-round display that also had him contributing heavily around the middle of the park - and even deep in his side's defensive territory at one point in the second-half.

Yesterday's tie was noteworthy too for the return of other familiar faces.

With his side having lost their opening two games of the League, and on an unbeaten run in 2012 amassing five games, Jim McGuinness recalled his heavy artillery for the visit of a renowned physically strong Cork.

Eamon McGee, Christy Toye, Colm McFadden and Michael Murphy were all handed first League starts of the year, while David Walsh was also drafted into a full-forward line that was entirely changed from the defeat to Laois three weeks ago.

Just before throw-in, McGee and Toye were fitted with heart monitors by Maxi Curran and it was interesting that both were withdrawn four minutes from the break, though the duo both put themselves about well.

With the side struggling in front of the posts in the year's early chapter, it was no surprise that his forward division was drastically altered for this one - and it didn't take long for the tale to have Murphy's prints over it.

Just 12 seconds in, the captain announced his return in some style. From Karl Lacey's perfectly-weighted ball, Murphy out manoeuvred Eoin O'Mahony, who slipped, and two steps later he slammed to the net, past a stunned Ken O'Halloran. It was like he was never away.

From the off, Donegal looked more cohesive than they'd been, the three-week lay-off clearly giving the side a collective spring in its step. For all that, though, Donegal squandered three early chances, which dropped short into O'Halloran's hands with a

further two efforts off-target.

Murphy's explosive start saw an early re-jig for Conor Counihan - with O'Mahony and Canty double-teaming the Glenswilly man on the edge of the square.

At the other end, Cork were very wasteful in the early stages and a pot-shot from Aidan Walsh was all they had to offer from the opening 20 minutes.

Indeed, the Rebels kicked four wides in that period before Donncha O'Connor reduced their arrears to a point in the 23rd minute with Donegal still searching to add to Murphy's goal, despite having a decent share of possession.

They did manage to get a white flag hoisted when the rampaging Frank McGlynn scurried forward to slot over after a determined burst forward by Ryan Bradley, only for

Mark Collins to keep his composure under severe pressure from the Donegal rearguard.

Colm O'Neill levelled things up, but a free from Murphy late in the half gave Donegal a slender advantage as the sides parted for the interval (1-2 to 0-4).

There was something of an ominous feel about things when Cork, with their half-back line rampaging forward at every opportunity, stole

ahead with two points inside five minutes of the re-start.

Paddy Kelly was allowed all the time in the world to equalise before Cork went ahead for the first time when Colm O'Neill splendidly converted a free off the ground from 35 metres.

But Murphy got Donegal back on level terms with another piece of genius, powering through to score after taking receipt of a deft pass from Rory Kavanagh.

The skipper restored Donegal's lead with an ice-cool 45 as the game entered its final quarter and fellow returnee Colm McFadden stretched the advantage with a hooked effort soon after.

The St Michael's man was out through a bulging back disc and while he didn't have too much success in front of the posts yesterday his performance was that of a man inching his way towards his best. McFadden was involved quite a bit yesterday and was unlucky not to fire a

51st minute goal, when O'Halloran saved well after he'd been played through by Murphy.

Karl Lacey got up to add a point to another top-class performance when he finished a move involving the excellent Neil Gallagher and sub McBrearty. There was a real homely

feel to Donegal's last score as young Martin O'Reilly did as he's done for years now and split his hometown posts at MacCumhail Park to seal a four-point win that finally gets Donegal off an running.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee; Neil McGee; Paddy McGrath; Frank McGlynn (0-1); Karl Lacey (0-1); Leo McLoone; Rory Kavanagh; Neil Gallagher; Mark McHugh; Ryan Bradley; Christy Toye; Colm McFadden (0-1); Michael Murphy (1-3, 1f, 1'45); David Walsh. **SUBS:** Anthony Thompson for E. McGee (31 mins); Patrick McBrearty for Toye (31 mins); Martin O'Reilly (0-1) for Walsh (44 mins); Daniel McLaughlin for Bradley (51 mins).

Cork: Ken O'Halloran; Ray Carey; Eoin O'Mahony; Eoin Cotter; Noel O'Leary; Graham Canty; Paudie Kissane; Aidan Walsh (0-1); Fintan Gould; Paul Kerrigan; Mark Collins (0-1); Patrick Kelly (0-1); Colm O'Neill (0-2, 1f); Donncha O'Connor (0-1); Barry O'Driscoll. **SUBS:** James Fitzpatrick for Gould (60 mins); Liam Shorten for O'Driscoll (60 mins); Denis O'Sullivan for O'Neill (62 mins).

“

We are not the first team Kerry have done that too but it's disappointing after a good performance the last day that we weren't able to be more competitive in the game at a minimum - Jim McGuinness

”



GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Match Stats

Kerry/Donegal

Goals	2/1
Points	16/8
Wides	7/7
45s	0/0
Frees awarded	24/18
Frees scored	8/4
Short efforts	1/0
Yellow cards	2/7
Red cards	0/1
Attendance	6,023

Booked: Kerry - Paul Galvin (27 mins), Bryan Sheehan (29 mins); Donegal - Michael Murphy (14 mins), Paddy McGrath (47 mins), Eamon McGee (48 mins), Karl Lacey (48 mins), Eamon McGee (56 mins), Neil Gallagher (65 mins), Christy Toye (69 mins)

Patrick McBrearty.

In a further change to his team, Anthony Thompson was re-instated, the Naomh Conaill man starting in the somewhat unorthodox centre half-forward role.

Thompson was on the mark in the second minute of the game, with Donegal's second point, after Rory Kavanagh had opened the scoring after just 15 seconds.

Donegal's economical start continued when Michael Murphy beautiful-

ly converted a free close to the left touchline.

But Kerry weren't long in asserting their dominance on things and the Kingdom reeled off 1-4 to take command.

Neil Gallagher was doing well in winning possession from kickouts and with Murphy operating out the field Donegal competed well around the middle third, but their downfall was when it came to the transition inside.

Bryan Sheehan came into the game with 20 points from the first three League games and the ace place-kicker from St Mary's continued his fine scoring record with three frees to level things up by the 12th minute.

His partner at centrefield, Anthony Maher, kicked Kerry ahead for the first time when he finished a move involving Donaghy, Galvin, Sheehan and Brian McGuire, before the half's big score arrived in the 18th minute.

Kieran Donaghy was at the epicentre of the move. He slipped in midfielder Anthony Maher and after he off-loaded to Darran O'Sullivan, the All-Star off-loaded to Patrick Curtin, who slammed home to the top shelf of Paul Durcan's net.

Momentarily stunned, Donegal did respond with two fine points from their captain, Murphy, only for a quick-fire brace from Donaghy to cancel those out.

In between Donaghy's pair of points, Paul Galvin seemed rather

fortunate to escape with only a yellow card for a hit on Leo McLoone.

Kerry stretched their advantage further when Sheehan's majesty from placed balls was outlined by an outrageous 55-metre free.

Barry John Keane made it a six-point game and it appeared as if the tie was slipping from Donegal's clutches when McBrearty registered to reduce the deficit to five at the short whistle.

Any hopes of a Donegal comeback were quashed within a minute of the re-start as Sheehan strode up to convert a penalty, awarded for a foul on Curtin.

Sheehan's kick was right in the corner and it was just as well for the St Mary's man as Durcan got down well to get a hand to it - but just couldn't keep it out.

A Sheehan free put Kerry ten ahead after wing-back Brian McGuire got up to point. Donegal might have made a fist of it, but they hit three bad wides in a row after Murphy had scored twice.

Donegal got a little closer when they were fortunate to get a penalty of their own as Shane Enright was adjudged to have fouled McFadden and Murphy brilliantly converted to the bottom corner, giving Kealy no chance.

It wasn't enough to summons a response and Kerry - with Sheehan, Galvin, Crowley, Maher and Curtin all on target - strolled on for an eleven-point win that was inches

away from being greater, only Barry John Keane's effort which skimmed just the wrong side of the post.

Contrasting emotions at the end: Kerry eyeing up a semi-final spot and Donegal looking at Sunday's home game with Mayo for some solace and a chance to move off the basement.


Kerry: Brendan Kealy; Marc Ó Sé, Daniel Bohan, Killian Young; Peter Crowley (0-1), Eoin Brosnan, Brian McGuire (0-1); Anthony Maher (0-2), Bryan Sheehan (1-7, 1-0 pen, 7f); Paul Galvin (0-1), Darran O'Sullivan, Declan O'Sullivan; Barry John Keane (0-1), Kieran Donaghy (0-2), Patrick Curtin (1-1, 1f). **SUBS:** Shane Enright for Bohan (half-time); Aidan O'Mahony for Ó Sé (61 mins); Kieran O'Leary for Keane (64 mins); David O'Callaghan for Declan O'Sullivan (66 mins); Seamus Scanlon for Sheehan (66 mins).

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Neil McGee, Paddy McGrath; Eamon McGee, Karl Lacey, Leo McLoone; Rory Kavanagh (0-1), Neil Gallagher; Mark McHugh, Anthony Thompson (0-1), Ryan Bradley; Colm McFadden, Michael Murphy (1-5, 1-0 pen, 4f), Patrick McBrearty (0-1). **SUBS:** Martin O'Reilly for Bradley (half-time); David Walsh for McLoone (half-time); Christy Toye for McHugh (59 mins).

Referee: Syl Doyle (Wexford).

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Strong win for Donegal



DONEGAL.....0-17
MAYO.....1-07

BY CHRIS MCNULTY
PHOTOS BY
DONNA MC BRIDE

DONEGAL overcame the dismissal of midfielder Rory Kavanagh to blow Mayo away in Ballyshannon yesterday.

Kavanagh was sent off in first-half stoppage time for an incident involving Kevin McLoughlin, but Donegal turned a two-point half-time deficit into a seven-point win in an explosive second-half that saw Mayo's Ger Cafferkey sent off after he was given a second yellow card by referee Marty Duffy.

Kavanagh's sending off was a big talking point. McLoughlin had fouled the St Eunan's man, who flung an arm back with the Mayo man having a hold of him. McLoughlin went unpunished for his part while Kavanagh made the long walk - and now faces the prospect of missing Saturday's clash with Dublin in Croke Park.

For a side most noted for their defensive exploits, Donegal's scoring return will have pleased their fans on a splendid afternoon at Fr Tierney Park. Colm McFadden scored seven points to see him top the scoring charts on the day, with Michael

Murphy again outstanding, hitting five points and having a real controlling influence on proceedings.

The win eases somewhat the relegation concerns for Donegal, though in a very tight division teams could still go either way.

But it came as a welcome response to a hammering in Kerry the previous week, when the Kingdom steamrolled them with an eleven-point win.

Yesterday, there were many positives for Donegal, with Murphy's star shining brightest. The captain left an magnificent mark on the contest, with his appearance for long periods at the edge of the square showing his undeniable threat to defences when stationed close to goal.

After a difficult couple of weeks, Colm McFadden was back on song with seven points and Neil Gallagher was again the boss of the midfield division. At the back, Donegal will have been disappointed in the manner of the concession of a goal to Enda Varley in the tenth minute, but otherwise it was a pretty sound display from the back six.

The half-back line of Anthony Thompson, Karl Lacey and Leo McLoone was a particularly impressive unit, but the big success for the rearguard was scoring a win and restricting Mayo to just eight scores - albeit including a goal - when minus regular full-back Neil McGee.

The Gaoth Dobhair All-Star was ruled out due to sickness with Martin O'Reilly coming back into the team and Eamon McGee taking station at full-back.

Disaster struck for Donegal as Mayo netted the game's opening goal with just ten minutes gone. McGee momentarily misjudged a raking ball

into the edge of the square and Alan Freenan capitalised.

Freenan and Mortimer combined to tee up Enda Varley, who hesitated at first before finally tucking home.

That gave them a kick and points from Alan Dillon and Mortimer (free) followed to stretch their lead out to five.

Patrick McBrearty had got Donegal's first score in the sixth minute with the next not coming until the 22nd minute.

Michael Murphy kick-started a Donegal revival with a magnificent point. Ryan Bradley was the provider with a perfectly-weighted delivery. Murphy superbly plucked the ball out of the sky and, under serious pressure from Cafferkey, the Glenswilly man half-volleyed over the bar.

Cafferkey was fortunate to escape severe sanction following a couple of fouls on Murphy, the second of which saw him get a final warning with

Colm McFadden tapping over the bar. The first, though, by the letter of the law, should have seen the Mayo full-back dismissed after pulling Murphy back with the Donegal skipper heading for goal.

McFadden (2) and Murphy got Donegal back to within a point, but by the interval they were two behind (1-5 to 0-6) and also a man down heading into part two as Kavanagh saw red with the last act of the half.

Any fears that it would contribute to a Donegal collapse were quickly dispelled. Indeed, it appeared to have the opposite effect with Donegal taking complete control in the second-half.

As inspired as Donegal were, Mayo were every bit as insipid. Manager James Horan reckoned after-

wards that his team was 'terrible' and it was hard to argue with his observation.

Time and time again Mayo coughed up possession and the moving of Andy Moran, their influential skipper, into full-forward was a peculiar one as it completely nullified what had been their most dangerous threat.

By the eighth minute of the second period Donegal were level. Karl

Lacey scampered up for an impressive point, which he settled for just as it appeared as if the defence was parting for a pop at goal, and the equaliser was from a superb McFadden free from the '45.

From here, it was pretty much all about Donegal. They hit the front for the first time in the 45th minute as McBrearty brilliantly fired over from the stand side.

McFadden landed another free before Leo McLoone scored the point of the game, polishing off a well-worked move involving McFadden, Lacey and half-time sub Martin McElhinney.

At the other end two minutes later McLoone preserved the lead with a superb robbing of possession from Moran, with the Mayo captain lining up a shot at the net.

A brace from Murphy was followed by a quick-fire couple of Donegal points to open up a seven-point lead as McFadden's free was followed by an excellent effort from distance by Mark McHugh.

Goalkeeper David Clarke came out to end the 35-minute Mayo famine with a '45, but Donegal's day was fittingly wrapped up by the deadly duo, McFadden and Murphy who be-

Sent off - Donegal - Rory Kavanagh (35 mins); Mayo - Ger Cafferkey (62 mins).

Attendance - 2,500 (approx)

tween them, hit 12 of their side's points

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Eamon McGee, Paddy McGrath; Karl Lacey (0-1), Leo McLoone (0-1), Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh, Neil Gallagher; Mark McHugh (0-1), Ryan Bradley, Martin O'Reilly; Colm McFadden (0-7, 6f), Michael Murphy (0-5, 2f), Patrick McBrearty (0-2). Subs: Martin McElhinney for O'Reilly (half-time); Dermot Molloy for Bradley (56 mins); David Walsh for McBrearty (70 mins).

Mayo: David Clarke (0-1, 1 '45); Kevin Keane, Ger Cafferkey, Keith Higgins; Peadar Gardiner, Donal Vaughan, Lee Keegan; Seamus Ó Sé, Barry Moran; Kevin McLoughlin, Andy Moran (0-1), Alan Dillon (0-1); Conor Mortimer (0-3, 3f), Alan Freenan, Enda Varley (1-0). Subs: Patrick Harte for Freenan (half-time); Richie Feeney for Keegan (43 mins); Cillian O'Connor for Varley (61 mins); Jason Doherty for McLoughlin (60 mins); Michael Conroy (0-1) for Mortimer (70 mins)

Referee: Marty Duffy (Sligo).

Match Stats

DONEGAL/ MAYO

Goals	0/1
Points	17/7
Wides	8/6
45s	0/1
Frees awarded	31/24
Frees scored	8/3
Short efforts	5/4
Yellow cards	3/7
Red cards	1/1

Connolly adds gloss as the Dubs sink Donegal

DUBLIN **2-16**
DONEGAL **0-13**
DERMOT CROWE
 at Croke Park

THE backdrop to this league encounter was a match which at the very least drew colourful reaction. In last year's All-Ireland semi final, a game Donegal could well have won, their brand of defensive football that had 13 players deeply entrenched sharply divided public opinion: you either found it strangely compelling or you deemed it offensive to your noble football instincts.

Did you qualify as a snob in not admiring the way Donegal played their football? Or did it really matter what you thought – it was happening anyway.

Last night the two sides locked horns again and the crowd was eager to see how that tactical maelstrom of defensive football panned out. Donegal were cavalier but that is not to say they were more effective than their last engagement with Dublin.

By half-time, four points adrift and struggling for scores, they already looked in bother and lacking ideas. In fairness they upped their game.

Michael Murphy kicked a monster free and one from play just as good soon after half time to set the tone, Neil McGee stormed forward and clipped another and when Murphy was fouled, Patrick McBrearty converted to level at ten points a piece.

Dublin, who suffered their first defeat of the League in Newry a week ago – a reality check after the champagne performance against Armagh – responded well. Kevin McManamon, who finished with three points, tore through and sent a blistering shot just over the crossbar and one of their new recruits, Dean Kelly, added another to put some daylight between the sides.

Donegal were undeterred and for a while the game was their for the bidding. Christy Toye and Murphy had them level again with 15 minutes left and by then they had Dublin's measure.

Getting their noses in front proved beyond them and the game turned against them when Cluxton kicked a free, Paul Flynn hit one of the best scores of the night and then Murphy went off with an injury. Lacking Murphy and

two behind entering the final ten minutes, they looked long odds to get anything out of it. Dean Rock added another to put three between them and they'd have been disappointed to lose a match from that position. They did call on Cluxton to make a fine save from McBrearty but those chances were rare and Dublin sealed it with late goals from Bryan Cullen and Diarmuid Connolly.

That was an extremely misleading and harsh final scoreline given Donegal's input but they were always chasing and didn't start well. They conceded three points before they had a shot at the Dublin goal. By half time you couldn't say they looked likely to win. Michael Murphy shouldered most of the scoring, while no other forward scored – their other two points were from their wing-backs.

Dublin looked more likely to score a goal. A neat interchange between McManamon and with Michael Darragh Macauley opened up Donegal's congested backline but the former's shot was weak – he looked to have some claims for a penalty; the referee paid no heed. Eamonn Fennell

broke forward in the first half and got his hand to a pass across goal from Kevin Nolan but Paul Durcan pulled off an excellent reflex save.

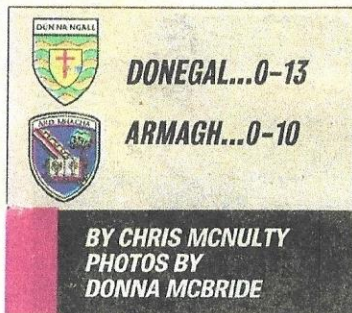
The chance came from one of Cluxton's pinpoint kickouts, picking out Ger Brennan and starting one of the better moves of the game. The play was vastly more open than its championship predecessor and by the 15th minute Dublin led 0-6 to 0-3. Nine points in 15 minutes going on the previous year was a scorefest but it slackened off on the way in to the interval.

Donegal won plenty ball on their own kickout yet they found it difficult to prise open scoring opportunities. Without Murphy they were lost.

Scorers — Dublin: D Connolly 1-3 (0-2 fs), B Cullen 1-1, K McManamon 0-3, A Brogan, E Fennell, MD Macauley, J Cooper, T Quinn, D Kelly, P Flynn, S Cluxton (f), D Rock 0-1 each. **Donegal:** M Murphy 0-6 (0-3 fs, 0-1 '45'), A Thompson, L McLoone, N McGee, C Toye, P McBrearty (f), D Walsh, M McElhinney 0-1 each.

Dublin: S Cluxton; C O'Sullivan, R O'Carroll, P McMahon; J Cooper, G Brennan, K Nolan; MD Macauley, E Fennell; P Flynn, A Brogan, B Cullen; T Quinn, D Connolly, K McManamon. **Subs:** S Murray for Brennan (inj 24), D Rock for Brogan (30), D Kelly for Quinn (h-t), C Dias for Cooper (59). **Donegal:** P Durcan; F McGlynn, N McGee, P McGrath; A Thompson, K Lacey, L McLoone; C Toye, N Gallagher; M McHugh, R Bradley, M O'Reilly; M McElhinney, M Murphy, P McBrearty. **Subs:** D Walsh for O'Reilly (30), E McGee for Toye (53), A Hanlon for Murphy (inj 59), D McLaughlin for Bradley (64). **Referee:** F Kinsella (Laois).

Donegal come good to stay safe



EASTER Sunday was Survival Sunday in soaking Ballybofey yesterday as Donegal preserved their Division 1 status and condemned Armagh to Division 2.

Donegal left it late and it was heart-stopping stuff at times, but Jim McGuinness's side came good with a late scoring spree to seal the win that keeps them in the top flight.

It hadn't looked good though with the writing scrawled ominously on the Donegal wall when full-back Brendan Donaghy put Armagh three in front with just under 20 minutes left.

Just then, Donegal were awoken. Their attack, minus their highly-influential injured captain Michael Murphy, had the appearance of one that had misfired - but a spirited Donegal scored six points in a row to seal a precious win.

It was the perfect way to finish off a topsy-turvy and disrupted League campaign. With the do-or-die nature of the contest, and relegation the fate that would befall whichever side lost, there was a Championship-like billing for yesterday's meeting.

Donegal swam as Armagh sank with plenty of positives for Jim McGuinness and Rory Gallagher to digest over the next six weeks as their work on fine-tuning the squad for their May 20th date with Cavan in the Championship now ready the high gears.

Armagh had their chances with Jamie Clarke rattling the post with a goal chance before sub John Kingham had a pot-shot blocked by Rory Kavanagh in stoppage time. It would have been very harsh on Donegal had they been pick-pocketed so late, for they had an excellent second-half and were deserving victors.

Given that they were without their talisman Murphy as well as injured full-back Neil McGee, there was a certain apprehension about squaring up to the Orchard, who welcomed back the Crossmaglen contingent for the must-win clash.

But it was Donegal who survived as that late purple patch proved so decisive. In all, Donegal had eight different scorers yesterday and with eleven of their scores coming from play the myth that Donegal couldn't win without Murphy - who had a watching brief on crutches yesterday - was dispelled.

Donegal fans - including former Ryder Cup winning golfer Paul McGinley, who was in attendance - were heartened by a superb display by rookie defender Declan Walsh, with Rory Kavanagh and Ryan Bradley also highly-instrumental and Colm McFadden coming up with five key scores.

Kavanagh returned from a suspension to reclaim a centrefield partnership with Neil Gallagher, but a calf injury kept Christy Toye sidelined, his St Michael's colleague Daniel McLaughlin elevated for a first League start of the year.

And there was a first League start, too, for Declan Walsh, after corner-back Paddy McGrath failed a late fitness test while a back injury picked up in the warm-up ruled Neil McGee out with Patrick McBrearty on the bench following a testing week at an Aussie Rules camp in Guildford.

McBrearty was thrown in with half-an-hour gone at a time when the game seemed in danger of slipping from Donegal, who trailed 0-6 to 0-3 at the time. The Kilcar man was withdrawn, fatigued, with two minutes to go.

By that stage, Donegal were in the driving seat. Armagh, who had the splendid free taking of Michael Stevenson as their only real outlet for scores, were three up as the game headed into its final 20 minutes.

Enter Donegal: six times in the closing 19 minutes Donegal split the sticks. The comeback was kick-started by corner-back Frank McGlynn. The Glenfin man had another fine game and he neatly knocked over after being put through by Rory Kavanagh.

Donegal were level on the hour mark as Mark McHugh fisted over following a score by McFadden.

The home side had a scare when Clarke appeared certain to find the net, only to be denied by the post after he fetched a wayward effort by Caolan Rafferty. The butt of the post saved Donegal with McGlynn blasting clear.

In the 64th minute, for the first time since Martin McElhinney scored in the second minute, Donegal led, as Kavanagh knocked over

after excellent approach work by David Walsh.

McFadden put two between them with a long-range free and the last say was had by Adrian Hanlon who smartly knocked over following an energetic burst up-field by Martin O'Reilly.

There was another brief moment of panic for the hosts as Kingham intercepted a pass from Kavanagh, who atoned by blocking the Armagh sub's purposeful shot at goal. Relief at the end for Donegal, but it hadn't looked likely in the first-half as Stevenson's majestic free-taking had Armagh in front.

Martin McElhinney had shot Donegal ahead, but three Stevenson frees followed their opener by Brian Mallon, whose blistering shot was well tipped over by Paul Durcan.

Three times Donegal reduced the arrears to two, Kavanagh, McFadden and Leo McLoone on the mark, but on each occasion Armagh responded, though the last act of the half was, crucially, a Donegal point by McFadden, after the move of the match involving McLoone, Gallagher and McGlynn.

Stevenson widened the gap to four with a pair of frees early in the second-half and McBrearty shot tamely at Philip McEvoy with a goal chance. Molloy and McFadden pulled Done-

gal back into it, and once McGlynn began their late flurry they'd got what they came for - safety.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn (0-1), Eamon McGee, Declan Walsh; Anthony Thompson, Karl Lacey, Leo McLoone (0-1); Rory Kavanagh (0-2), Neil Gallagher; Mark McHugh (0-1), Ryan Bradley, Daniel McLaughlin; David Walsh, Colm McFadden (0-5, 2f), Martin McElhinney (0-1). Subs: Dermot Molloy (0-1) for McLaughlin (26 mins); Patrick McBrearty for McElhinney (30 mins); Martin O'Reilly for McGee (59 mins); Stephen Griffin for McBrearty (68 mins); Adrian Hanlon (0-1) for McLoone (70 mins).

Armagh: Philip McEvoy; Andy Mallon, Brendan Donaghy (0-1), Declan McKena; Finnian Moriarty, Ciaran McKeever (0-1), Paul Duffy; Aaron Kernan, Charlie Vernon; Brian Mallon (0-1), Anto Duffy, Caolan Rafferty; Michael Stevenson (0-7, 7f), Jamie Clarke, Kevin Dyas. Subs: Tony Kernan for P Duffy (half-time); Michael O'Rourke for Mallon (45 mins); James Lavery for Moriarty (59 mins); Gavin McPartland for Stevenson (63 mins); John Kingham for T. Kernan (70 mins).

Referee: Cormac Reilly (Meath).

Match Stats

DONEGAL/ARMAGH

Goals	0/0
Points	13/10
Wides	9/7
45s	0/1
Frees awarded	22/15
Frees scored	2/7
Short efforts	4/1
Yellow cards	1/2
Red cards	0/0
Attendance	3,000

Booked: Donegal - Anthony Thompson (27 mins); Armagh - Brian Mallon (43 mins), Finnian Moriarty (56 mins).

IN BRIEF

Donegal score six points in a row in the last 20 minutes to take the win they needed that keeps them in Division 1 for 2013.