

2013

Senior Football – Team manager: Jim McGuinness

Dr. Mc Kenna Cup - Section A

	6 th Jan 2013	Clones	Monaghan	1-13	St. Mary's	2-06
1	9 th Jan 2013	Brewster Park	Fermanagh	2-15	Donegal	2-07
	13 th Jan 2013	Brewster Park	St Mary's	1-05	Fermanagh	2-15
2	13 th Jan 2013	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-05	Monaghan	3-16
3	16 th Jan 2013	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-14	St Mary's	2-10
	16 th Jan 2013	Inniskeen	Monaghan	1-12	Fermanagh	0-07

Position	Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Points
1	Monaghan	3	3	0	0	56	27	6
2	Fermanagh	3	2	0	1	49	36	4
3	Donegal	3	1	0	2	38	62	2
4	St Mary's University College	3	0	0	3	36	54	0

Semi Finals

20 th Jan 2013	Athletic Grounds	Monaghan	1-12	Down	0-13
20 th Jan 2013	Athletic Grounds	Tyrone	2-09	Fermanagh	0-07

Final

26 th Jan	Athletic Grounds	Tyrone	4-11	Monaghan	1-10
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Allianz Football League – Div 1

4	2 nd Feb	7.00 PM	Páirc an Chrócaigh	Kildare	2-14	Donegal	1-13
5	9 th Feb	7 00 PM	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-12	Down	0-07
6	3 rd March	2 00 PM	Omagh	Tyrone	1-13	Donegal	0-12
7	10 th March	2 00 PM	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-12	Kerry	0-06
8	16 th March	5 00 PM	Páirc Uí Rinn	Cork	1-12	Donegal	1-10
9	24 th march	2 30 PM	Elvery's MacHale Park, Mayo	1-10	Donegal	0-09	
10	7 th April	3 00 PM	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-10	Dublin	0-13

League Table

Pos	Team	P	W	L	D	F	A	Points
1	Dublin	7	5	1	1	129	88	11
2	Tyrone	7	5	2	0	105	97	10
3	Kildare	7	4	3	0	102	117	8
4	Mayo	7	3	4	0	93	90	6
5	Cork	7	3	4	0	91	97	6
6	Kerry	7	3	4	0	72	91	6
7	Donegal	7	2	4	1	87	87	5
8	Down	7	2	5	0	90	102	4

14 th April	Semi final	Croke Park	Dublin	2-16	Mayo	0-16
14 th April	Semi final	Croke Park	Tyrone	2-15	Kildare	2-11
21st April	Div 1 Final	Croke Park	Dublin	0-18	Tyrone	0-17
21st April	Div 2 Final	Croke Park	Derry	1-18	Westmeath	0-15
20th April	Div 3 Final	Croke Park	Monaghan	2-16	Meath	3-08
20th April	Div 4 Final	Croke Park	Limerick	0-16	Offaly	1-11

Ulster Senior Football Championship

11	26 th May	Qtr. Final	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	2-10	Tyrone	0-10
12	23 rd June	Semi final	Breffni Park	Donegal	0-12	Down	0-09
13	21 st July	Final	Clones	Donegal	0-13	Monaghan	0-07

All Ireland Qualifiers

14	27 th July	Round 4	Carrick on Shannon	Donegal	0-14	Laois	0-08
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All Ireland Quarter finals

15	4 th August		Croke Park	Donegal	1-10	Mayo	4-17
	4 th August		Croke Park	Kerry	0-15	Cavan	0-09
	3 rd August		Croke Park	Tyrone	0-14	Monaghan	0-12
	3 rd August		Croke Park	Dublin	1-16	Cork	0-14

All Ireland Semi finals

	25 th August		Croke Park	Mayo	1-16	Tyrone	0-13
	1 st Sept.		Croke Park	Dublin	3-18	Kerry	3-11

All Ireland Final

	22 nd Sept.		Croke Park	Dublin	2-12	Mayo	1-14
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New-look Donegal are easily beaten by Fermanagh

BY ALAN FOLEY

A foggy Brewster Park in January seemed a million miles from Croke Park in September as Donegal's All-Ireland champions blew off the cobwebs of winter in their NI Power Dr McKenna Cup opener.

Fermanagh2-15
Donegal.....2-7

Jim McGuinness and members of the panel who had just returned from Dubai the day beforehand wore bronze reflections on a bleak night in Enniskillen and an eight-point loss.

The Donegal manager started with an entirely different XV to that who had beaten Mayo in September. Only when Dermot Molloy appeared at the start of the second half did Donegal have a man involved who made the hallowed turf that day.

McGuinness's record as Donegal manager is exemplary for the most part but in his two years in charge, he had won just the one Dr McKenna Cup match from six. That came against University of Ulster, Jordanstown on his first day in office. With the U-21 side due to take on Tyrone in March in their Ulster championship opener, Maxi Curran was the liveliest of those on the sideline for Donegal.

At one point nearing the end of the second half, Donegal hadn't scored in half an hour and trailed 2-12 to 0-4. Two late goals, though, put a better look on the final scoreboard.

Fermanagh, who fielded a stronger team from the off, opened the scoring in the fifth minute when Shane McGowan saw an intended pass intercepted and Paul Ward nipped possession. Ward fed his partner at full-forward, Darryl Keenan, who drove underneath Michael Boyle in the Donegal goal.

McGowan, at the other end, opened Donegal's account with a well-taken score before Kane Connor pointed for Fermanagh, which left the score 1-1 to 0-1 for the home side. Donegal rallied for a spell with Gary McFadden scoring a brace, while Stephen Griffin was also on the mark.

Ward, with a free, was the only man from the hosts to score in this little spell of Donegal dominance.

However, it was Fermanagh who finished the half much the stronger as the fog finally began to lift. Ward, corner-back Johnny Woods, substitute Marty O'Brien and centre-fielder Shane Lyons made for a 1-6 to 0-4 interval lead.

Fermanagh pressed ahead as the second half took shape. Another substitute, Sean Quigley, pointed from a free with his first touch and then Ward was on the money again, also from a placed ball. Quigley then added a second point as the Fermanagh experience began to tell.

Whatever lingering hopes Donegal might've harboured of getting a result on the road disintegrated 12 minutes into the second half when the three-pronged Fermanagh forage manufactured a second goal. Tommy McElroy had options left and right as he broke through the non-too resistant yellow blanket. McElroy fed Ward, who immediately played in Thomas Corrigan for a simple goal, making it 2-9 to 0-4.

Donegal's attacks were sporadic and they were well off the pace. Keenan scored a simple free, Ward was again accurate and James Sherry came from the bench to notch a point. Gary McFadden, with an effort that clipped the top of Chris Snow's crossbar on the way over, scored Donegal's first point of the second half, 21 minutes in. The Glenswilly captain added another, just moments later.

Ward, though, was having a fine game, scored his fifth of the day before Donegal, to their credit, did try and muster something of a comeback. With 10 minutes left, Adrian Hanlon got the slightest

of touches ahead of Snow following a booming ball in from Luke Keaney to pull Donegal from the floor, 2-13 to 1-6 down.

Then, just two minutes later, Snow, whose uncle, Gary, played minor and U-21 football for Donegal, was beaten again when Molloy drove under him. The Naomh Conaill U-21 captain then scored a late free and although Donegal did well to make a game of it late on.

Fermanagh deservedly won. Marty McGrath and Quigley sealed the seven-point win with the last scores of the day.

Fermanagh: Chris Snow; Ryan McCluskey, Anthony McGuinness, Johnny Woods (0-1); Declan McCusker, Brian Cox, Damian Kelly; James Sherry (0-1), Shane Lyons (0-1); Tommy McElroy, Shane McCabe, Eoin Donnelly; Paul Ward (0-5, 1f), Darryl Keenan (1-1, 1f), Kane Connor (0-1). Subs: Marty O'Brien (0-1) for Kelly (17), Sean Quigley (0-3, 1f) and Tomas Corrigan (1-0) for Lyons and Connor (half-time), Marty McGrath for T Corrigan (44), Niall Bogue for Cox (62).

Donegal: Michael Boyle (Termon); Kevin McFadden (Cloughaneely), Ciaran Cannon (Letterkenny Gaels), Thomas McKinley (Naomh Colmcille); Luke Keaney (Four Masters), Shane McGowan (Bundoran, 0-1), Marty Boyle (Naomh Conaill), Ross Wherity (St Eunan's), Packie Mailey (St Mary's Convoy); Daniel McLaughlin (St Michael's), Gary McFadden (Glenswilly, 0-4, 1f), Stephen Griffin (St Naul's, 0-1, 1f); Odhran MacNiallais (Gaoth Dobhair), Adrian Hanlon (Dungloe, 1-0), William Gillespie (Naomh Colmcille). Subs: Dermot Molloy (Naomh Conaill 1-1, 1f) and Caoian Ward (St Eunan's) for Mailey and McGarvey (half-time), Pauric Carr (Kilcar) for McKinley (60), Leon Kelly (Glenswilly) for Wherity (64).

Referee: Martin Sludden (Tyrone).

GAA - POWER NI DR MCKENNA CUP SECTION A

Heavy defeat, but...



DONEGAL..... 1-05
MONAGHAN..... 3-16

BY CHRIS MCNULTY
AT MACCUMHAILL PARK

IT was a day when the priorities of Malachy O'Rourke and Jim McGuinness were laid out in Ballybofey.

Although Monaghan coasted to a seventeen-point win over a shadow Donegal team in MacCumhaill Park yesterday, there were few quibbles from camp Tir Chonaill, which again bore both a youthful and an inexperienced exterior.

O'Rourke fielded a strong Monaghan side by the Finn with Conor McManus, Darren Hughes, Kieran Hughes and Dessie Mone in a team that showed ten changes to the side that had beaten St Mary's last weekend.

As O'Rourke patrolled the soaking touchlines with intent, Jim McGuinness watched over his fledgling flock from the top deck of the press box alongside his assistant Rory Gallagher.

Maxi Curran, the under 21 manager, again called the shots on the line for a Donegal team that just didn't have a cutting edge in attack, which was punished by the more experienced Monaghan.

Second half goals by debutant Keith McEneaney, sub Dermot Malone and Darren Hughes gave Monaghan a landslide win, but manager O'Rourke wasn't getting carried away by the scoreboard's face at the end.

"We have to take it in context. Donegal were obviously missing a lot of players, but we can only concentrate on ourselves. We're happy with where we are," said the former Fermanagh boss.

Jim McGuinness's record in the McKenna Cup is just one win from eight, though it's hardly a record to be concerned about.

"We trained just beforehand and it's about getting ready for the League. It's good for the players to stand back and watch a Donegal team playing from a different perspective," said McGuinness, whose All-Stars Michael Murphy and Neil McGee were among the sparse Ballybofey attendance.

"They won't take any part in the McKenna Cup. It is about focussing on our own training. We got Thursday night done and we trained again Saturday and Sunday this week. We'll do the same this week and keep it going like that until the Kildare game on the 2nd of February.

"It was tough today.

"We decided to focus on our own players after coming back from the holiday and we have three weeks between now and the League. We have three weeks to get the first team up to speed. We've got a couple of sessions under our belt now.

"We decided to put in as many of the under 21s and fringe players as we could and give a go to other players who maybe didn't get trials to see how they'd fare out."

Donegal made five changes to the team that lost to Fermanagh in Enniskillen on Wednesday night. Declan Walsh was captain for the day on his return, while Peter Boyle, Cory Gallagher, Caolan Ward and James Carroll also came into the team.

In the cases of Dungloe's Gallagher and Gaoth Dobhair man Carroll, their appearances marked their senior debuts, while it was a first start for Ward, who came on as a sub in Fermanagh.

St Michael's player Michael Cannon was handed a first senior appearance considerably earlier than he'd have imagined as he got the nod just five minutes in to replace club colleague Daniel McLaughlin. Cannon showed some flashes of good alertness, awareness and ability in an encouraging display.

Later in the game, cameo appearances in the dying moments marked first senior bows for Conor Gibbons (St Eunan's) and Adi O'Gara (Naomh Mhuire).

Donegal had to wait until the 28th minute for their first score; a goal. Kevin McFadden made ground down the left flank before Ciaran Cannon's delivery was superbly fetched by Willie Gillespie and the Newton man squared for Hanlon to crash into the roof of the net.

Gillespie, making only his second senior appearance, was very involved and made him self busy during the first half, with Walsh also influential in the opening period.

Donegal might well have had the perfect start when, just two minutes in, Monaghan 'keeper Mark Keogh failed to properly deal with a high ball in. Under pressure from Hanlon, Keogh seemed to be behind the line, but the umpire's flag remained grounded.

Hughes boomed over two expert scores to give Monaghan an early edge - and it was a lead they held for the game's duration.

An 18th minute free by Paul McArdle continued Monaghan's early dominance, before McEneaney and Conor McManus put the Farney county five up.

Hanlon's goal and a subsequent point by Gary McFadden brought Donegal to within a point, but Monaghan pulled three clear by the closing of the opening stanza thanks to converted frees by McArdle and McManus.

Donegal's hopes suffered a severe blow just 20 seconds into the second half when McEneaney scorched home after bursting in from the end line and side-stepping a defender before crisply finishing past Peter Boyle.

Stephen Griffin and Gillespie hit points for Donegal, but already the efforts of the home team were looking to be in vain as Monaghan, directed by the influential Hughes, clocked on scores.

Hughes drilled over two superb points before debuting corner-back Owen Coyle got up to land a stylish point.

Ten minutes from time, Monaghan pressed home their dominance of the game when sub Dermot Malone riffled home after taking a pass by Kieran Duffy, Griffin curled over a delightful score and skipper Declan Walsh added another, but Donegal hopes had long since faded.

Just for good measure, Monaghan managed to breach the Donegal defence for a third and final time in the last minute as Malone centred for Darren Hughes to palm home into the unguarded net.

DONEGAL: Peter Boyle; Kevin McFadden, Ciafan Cannon, Thomas McKinley; Cory Gallagher, Shane McGowan, Declan Walsh (0-1); Caolan Ward, Ross Wherity; Stephen Griffin (0-2), Gary McFadden (0-1), Daniel McLaughlin; James Carroll, Adrian Hanlon (1-0), Willie Gillespie (0-1). Subs: Michael Cannon for McLaughlin (5 mins); Pauric Carr for McKinley (53 mins); Leon Kelly for Gillespie (53 mins); Conor Gibbons for Carroll (69 mins); Adi O'Gara for Gallagher (69 mins).

MONAGHAN: Mark Keogh; Ronan McNally, David Hughes, Owen Coyle (0-1); Kieran Duffy, Dessie Mone, Conor Galligan; Owen Lennon, Darren Hughes (1-0); Kieran Hughes (0-6, 1f), Paul McArdle (0-2, 2f), Thomas O'Neill; Keith McEneaney (1-1), Conor McManus (0-4, 3f), Donal Hahessy. Subs: Dermot Malone (1-2) for McEneaney (39 mins); Dick Clerkin for Lennon (48 mins); Shane McQuillan for McArdle (49 mins); Gerard McArdle for Duffy (60 mins); Owen Duffy for McManus (62 mins).

REFEREE: Cathal O'Hagan (Tyrone).

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL V MONAGHAN

1	Goals	3
5	Points	16
4	Wides	8
0	45s	0
24	Frees awarded	19
0	Frees scored	6
6	Short efforts	2
3	Yellow cards	1
0	Red cards	0

GAA – POWER NI DR MCKENNA CUP GROUP A

Useful workout and first win



DONEGAL 1-14
ST MARY'S 2-10

BY CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY

LATE scores by Ross Wherity and Conor Gibbons earned Donegal a first win of the new campaign as their McKenna Cup campaign drew to a low-key conclusion against St Mary's College in Ballybofey on Wednesday night.

Only around 200 spectators turned out for what turned out to be a useful workout for the Donegal Under 21s, with eleven of them starting a game in which none of the 2012 All-Ireland winning panel featured.

Maxi Curran again directed operations from the sidelines as the late Wherity-Gibbons brace clinched a last-gasp win on a night when confusion reigned as to the actual outcome of the contest. The scoreboard showed the game to have been a draw - 1-14 to 2-11 - and the fourth official was said to concur.

However, the phantom St Mary's point didn't make it onto the abacus of the Monaghan referee Donal Connolly, who confirmed the insistence from the press box that Donegal had won the game by a point.

It was a welcome win, but there was no need to break the band out. Still, it was a useful exercise in which Odhrán MacNiallais, Ciaran Cannon and Kevin McFadden were the pick of the lot for a youthful side ultimately gearing for an Under 21 Championship clash with Tyrone on March 20th. but also looking to

lay down their credentials for possible senior team opportunities.

Donegal handed first senior appearances to Kilcar's Eoin McHugh and Naomh Conaill's John O'Malley from the start, while Adi O'Gara (Naomh Mhuire), Pauric Carr (Kilcar) and Michael Cannon (St Michael's) were making first starts having appeared as subs previously in the competition.

Indeed, O'Gara had created a little nugget of history on Sunday when he became the first ever player from the Naomh Mhuire club to represent Donegal at senior level.

MacNiallais appeared for the first time in 2013, and for the first time competitively since last year's McKenna Cup and it was the young Gaoth Dobhair who man lit the touch paper in the opening exchanges.

Eight minutes in, he fetched a raking Michael Cannon ball into the danger zone before coolly finishing past Darragh McAnenly.

An early brace from MacNiallais and the opening point, a John O'Malley free had Donegal 1-3 to 0-1 ahead.

Paddy Tally's students hit back when Donegal netminder Peter Boyle took down Brendan Hasson, leaving ref' Donal Connolly with no option but to award a penalty. Brendan Herron stepped up to convert in style and St Mary's were within a point when Ronan Sexton arched over.

MacNiallais and Herron swapped points before McAnenly saved St Mary's with a fine save to deny Ciaran Cannon after MacNiallais did well to keep the ball in play.

Moments earlier, McAnenly saved from James Carroll who was played in by the quick-thinking MacNiallais.

Luke Keane and

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v ST MARY'S

1	Goals	2
14	Points	10
5	Wides	6
0	45s	0
21	Frees awarded	24
4	Frees scored	3
2	Short efforts	0
3	Yellow cards	1
0	Red cards	0

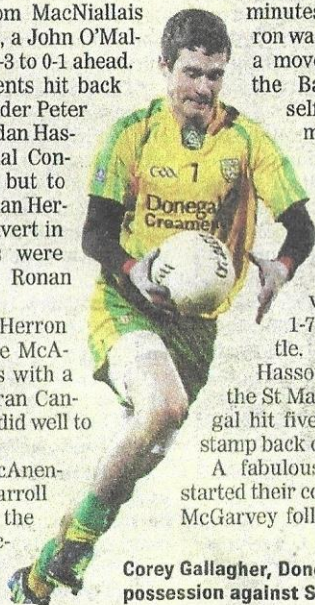
ATTENDANCE 200 (APPROX)

Packie Mailey put Donegal's lead out to three, but it was St Mary's who finished the half the stronger. Two minutes before the break, Herron was again at the fulcrum of a move that concluded with the Ballinascreen man unselfishly squaring for former Down player Sexton to slot home to an unguarded net.

A Herron free put St Mary's ahead for the first time in first half stoppage time, the visitors holding a 2-5 to 1-7 lead at the short whistle.

Hasson and Herron pushed the St Mary's lead out, but Donegal hit five in a row to put their stamp back on proceedings.

A fabulous John O'Malley free started their comeback, with sub Sean McGarvey following up with equally



Corey Gallagher, Donegal in possession against St Mary's.

impressive effort from 40 metres. Keane levelled before Donegal hit the front when Gibbons found the range under pressure after Willie Gillespie did well to win the ball.

A fifth Tir Chonaill point in a row came when O'Malley impressively slotted over from distance and, in between times, Boyle came to the Donegal rescue when he came out to thwart the advances of Richard O'Callaghan's whose batted follow-up crashed off the bar.

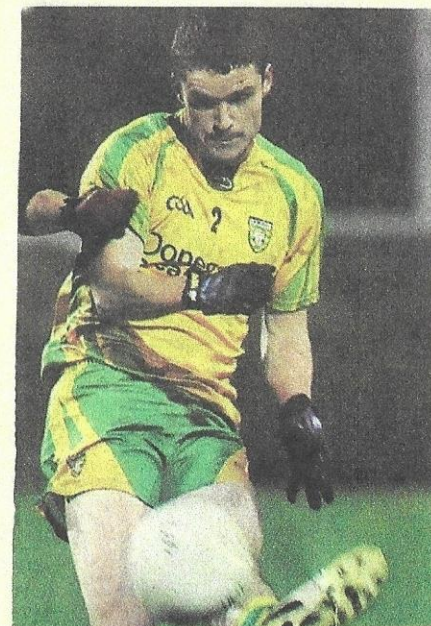
St Mary's looked to have done enough when Sexton (free), Doyle and O'Neill swung over scores, only for Donegal to tip the scales with their late brace.

Donegal: Peter Boyle; Pauric Carr, Caolan Ward, Adi O'Gara; Eoin McHugh, Kevin McFadden, Cory Gallagher; Luke Keane (0-2), Ciaran Cannon; Packie Mailey (0-1), James Carroll, Michael Cannon; Odhrán MacNiallais (1-3), Ross Wherity, John O'Malley (0-4, 3f). Subs: Conor Gibbons (0-2, 1f) for M.Cannon (29 mins); Sean McGarvey (0-1) for Carroll (half-time); Willie Gillespie for MacNiallais (49 mins); Jason Campbell for Carr (59 mins).

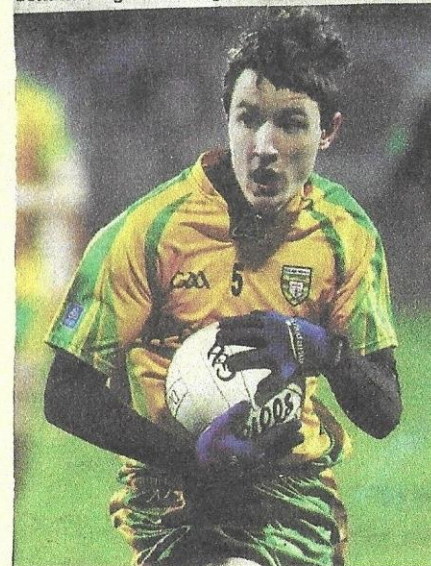
St Mary's: Darragh McAnenly; Stephen Mullan, Aiden Maguire, Michael Murray, Ruairi Loughran, Conor O'Hara, Brian Doyle (0-1); Richard O'Callaghan, Brendan Hasson (0-1); Ronan Sexton (1-2, 1f), Brendan Herron (1-5, 1-Open, 2f), Niall Sludden; Daniel McKinless, Sean O'Neill (0-1), James Duffy. Subs: Conor McMahon for Duffy (48 mins); Patrick McAleer for O'Callaghan (58 mins); Aidan McGarrity for Sexton (58 mins); Ronan McParland for Doyle (68 mins)

Referee: Donal Connolly (Monaghan).

Pauric Carr of Donegal gets the pass away



Eoin McHugh of Donegal in possession



SPORT

ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

PETER CAMPBELL
Sports Editor

DESPITE a wonderful display from captain Michael Murphy, Donegal came up just short against a very sharp Kildare in the first round of games in the National Football League in Croke Park on Saturday night.

Donegal1-13
Kildare2-14

This was a rip roaring start to the National Football League with the Donegal-Kildare game completely overshadowing the following game between Dublin and Cork, which was a tame affair.

A mistake by Paul Durcan in the Donegal goal to allow a Johnny Doyle centre slip through his grasp with six minutes left, was one of the deciding issues, but overall the Leinster side fully deserved their victory.

Donegal had to start without Paddy McGrath and Mark McHugh and this added to the other absentees - Karl Lacey, Neil Gallagher and David Walsh - meant their panel was really tested. They also lost Colm McFadden early in the contest when he suffered a leg injury.

In the usual void before the game, there were rumours that both McGrath and McHugh were in trouble, but one of the first man in the press room with the news of Wherity's inclusion was Seamus 'Banty' McEnaney.

The St. Eunan's man battled hard and at times alone up front, but it was a big 'ask' to make your debut in such a big game at Croke.

The difference in fitness was evident in the opening half as Kildare dominated possession and they used the aerial route to Tomas O'Connor to unsettle Donegal.

Even though the All-Ireland champions had the opening three points from Michael Murphy (2) and Patrick McBrearty, Kildare slowly got going and a goal from O'Connor, who reacted quickest when a Mikey Conway free came back off a post, saw Kieran McGeeney's side ahead for the first time on 17 minutes, 1-2 to 0-3.

Donegal were having difficulty establishing any sort of midfield platform and Paul Durcan was almost caught when one of his short kick-outs was intercepted by Johnny Doyle on 23 minutes but he failed to punish.

But slowly Kildare moved further ahead with Doyle to the fore and Niall Kelly also hitting a great score and by half-time they were 1-7 to 0-5 ahead, thanks to further points from Brian Flanagan and Paddy O'Neill.

Donegal did have a couple of great breaks with Anthony Thompson putting the impressive Murphy through on 26 minutes and his shot went just over the bar, while Leo McLoone made a great break on 31 minutes but didn't punish.

Michael Murphy got a fist to a Patrick McBrearty point to open Donegal's second half account but Kildare hit back with three points from Niall Kelly and Doyle (2) to go seven clear and it was bleak looking for Donegal.

But then, inspired by Murphy, they hit six unanswered points to cut the deficit to the minimum by the 59th minute. Murphy hit three of those with Patrick McBrearty, Mark McHugh and Dermot Molloy also finding the target.

Leo McLoone had a great effort just wide of the posts on 61 minutes before a late tackle on Gary White saw Mikey Conway stretch the Kildare lead and then came the Durcan mistake as he misjudged a Johnny Doyle centre and the ball ended up in the corner of the net.

Donegal did hit back with Ross Wherity engineering an opening and Dermot Molloy bundled the ball to the

net from very close range, but Kildare were not going to be denied and Niall Kelly and Eoghan O'Flaherty pushed them four clear before Michael Murphy and Paddy Brophy exchanged late points.

Overall, it was a very good contest, but apart from the opening quarter, Donegal looked second best against a Kildare side that were 'championship fit'.

Apart from the excellent Doyle, Kildare had standout performers in Peter Kelly, Niall Kelly and Paddy O'Neill, while apart from Murphy, Rory Kavanagh, Eamon McGee and Anthony Thompson were best for Donegal.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Declan Walsh, Neil McGeeney, Eamon McGee; Frank McGlynn, Leo McLoone, Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh, Martin McElhinney; Marty Boyle, Michael Murphy (0-9, 5f), Ryan Bradley; Colm McFadden, Ross Wherity, Patrick McBrearty (0-2,1f). Subs., Dermot Molloy (1-1) for McFadden 11; Mark McHugh (0-1) for M Boyle 31; Daniel McLaughlin for McGlynn ht.

Kildare: Shane Connolly; Ollie Lyons, Peter Kelly, Hugh McGrillen; Emmet Bolton, Michael Foley, Mikey Conway (0-2,2f); Gary White, Paddy O'Neill (0-1); Brian Flanagan (0-1), Niall Kelly (0-3), Daniel Flynn; Seanie Johnston, T O'Connor (1-0), J Doyle (1-5,2f). Subs., Paddy Brophy (0-1) for Johnston 55; Eoin Doyle for Bolton 59; Eoghan O'Flaherty (0-1) for White 62

Referee: Cormac Reilly (Meath)

Man of the match

That was easy. Michael Murphy was head and shoulders above any player in Croke Park on Saturday evening. Peter Kelly, Niall Kelly and Paddy

O'Neill were best for Kildare.

Turning point

Kildare's response after Donegal got back within a point with 11 minutes left. Their second goal may have been fortunate, but they could have folded but hit back and were rewarded.

Ref watch

Cormac Reilly had a mixed game, although he tried hard to keep it flowing and with both sides employing bunch

tackling, it wasn't easy.

Match Stats

First half

	G	P	F	W	45s
Donegal	0	5	13	3	0
Kildare	1	7	16	4	0

Second half

Donegal	1	8	10	1	0
Kildare	1	7	10	5	0

Totals

Donegal	1	13	23	4	0
Kildare	2	14	26	9	0



Kildare's Brian Flanagan tackles Eamon McGee of Donegal

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Donegal step it up to win

DONEGAL 0-12
DOWN 0-07

BY CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY

DONEGAL got 2013 up and running when they came from behind to bag a five-point win over Down in Ballybofey.

Neil Gallagher came on at half-time for his 100th Donegal appearance and helped change the game in his side's favour on a night when Ryan McHugh made his senior Donegal debut and Ross Wherity gave an encouraging display.

Donegal had struggled again to win the primary possession in the opening 35 minutes - after which they were a point down, 0-5 to 0-4 - but when Gallagher ran through the tunnel for the second half, Donegal were a changed unit.

Gallagher was a calming influence on Donegal who were much more economical with possession in the second half than they had been in a first half in which they kicked seven wides.

"There was nothing new said at half-time in relation to what we wanted to do in the second half," insisted Jim McGuinness, the Donegal manager.

"We created a lot of chances in the first half, with maybe two or three goals chances, but we had a lot of wides and dropped a few short.

"We made some good incisions and were getting good ball into Michael so we were happy enough with the chances we created. We wouldn't have been happy at all with how we were going about finishing them.

"We spoke at half time about continuing to do what we'd do in the hope and belief that things would come right for us. We kicked eight points in the second half so that was good peg-

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL	v	DOWN
0	Goals	0
12	Points	7
10	Wides	10
2	45s	2
19	Frees awarded	20
5	Frees scored	4
3	Short efforts	4
4	Yellow cards	4
0	Red cards	0

ATTENDANCE 8,000 (APPROX)

ging by the boys."

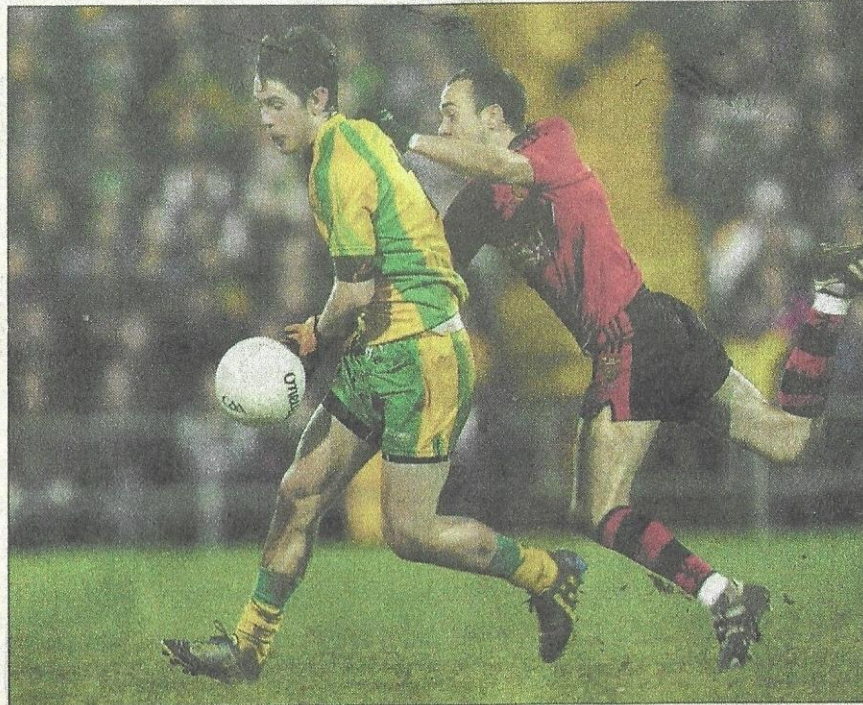
Michael Cunningham, the Down goalkeeper, saved his side with a strong eighth-minute save that thwarted Neil McGee, the Donegal full-back who ghosted up to get on the end of a superb flowing move by the home side.

For all of Donegal's early territorial supremacy, they miscued a number of good openings and hit just two points in the opening 35 minutes - only for stoppage time frees by McFadden and Murphy to pull them to within a point at the interval.

Murphy and O'Hare swapped frees in the first seven minutes and O'Hare levelled the scores again when he slotted over after a fine point from by Ross Wherity briefly regained the lead for Donegal.

Down hit the front for the first time in the 24th minute when O'Hare curled over his third free of the night after a cheaply conceded foul by Mark McHugh on Conor Laverty and Kevin McKernan boomed over a 45-metre free to put the Mourne ahead by two.

Down had to wait until the 32nd minute for their first score from play, but they went three in front thanks to a splendid O'Hare score.



Donegal senior debut Ryan McHugh gets out in front of Conor Laverty on Saturday night.
Andrew Paton/Presseye.com,

McFadden and Murphy knocked over frees late in the half. It was level pegging when Murphy stroked over after fetching a ball in from McHugh the younger, who was growing in confidence by now.

After Leo McLoone screwed a goal opportunity across the face of goal, Donegal hit the front as Rory Kavanagh landed the score of the game, a superb effort from the stand side that raised the roof.

Neil McGee intervened with a timely interception to deny the advances

of Paul McComiskey, with Down contesting for a penalty, but the well-placed Marty Duffy was having none of it.

McLoone and a brace of Murphy frees put Donegal five up and McGee again stepped in with yet another intervention, this time to reel in the hopes of O'Hare as he sped in.

Murphy fisted over after nice build-up work from Mark McHugh and Wherity while Declan Walsh hit Donegal's ninth score in a row 13 minutes from time.

O'Hare ended a 32-minute barren spell for Down, but it was too little, too late, even when McKiernan popped over a score after that and Daniel McLaughlin, the substitute, tucked over Donegal's final point to earn the win.

For Down, it was yet more frustration and a second defeat in two League games for James McCartan.

"That's the second week in a row that we've had a really positive first half and haven't built on it," lamented the Down manager.

"It's disappointing. Donegal got nine in a row and in the last ten minutes we had a couple of goal chances that could have made things interesting had they gone in."

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Declan Walsh (0-1), Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Anthony Thompson, Leo McLoone (0-1), Ryan McHugh; Rory Kavanagh (0-1), Martin McElhinney; Mark McHugh, Michael Murphy (0-6, 4f), Ryan Bradley; Colm McFadden (0-1, 1f), Ross Wherity (0-1), Patrick McBrearty. Subs: Neil Gallagher for McElhinney (half-time), Dermot Molloy for McBrearty (54 mins), Daniel McLaughlin (0-1) for McFadden (62 mins), Odhrán MacNiallais for N.McGee (70 mins).

Down: Michael Cunningham; Damian Turley, Daniel McCartan, Ryan Boyle; Ryan Mallon, Aidan Carr, Brendan McArdle; Kalum King, Kevin McKernan (0-2, 1f); Keith Quinn, Mark Poland, Paul McComiskey; Conor Laverty, Connaire Harrison, Donal O'Hare (0-5, 3f). Subs: Peter Turley for McArdle (half-time), Benny Coulter for Harrison (48 mins), Declan Rooney for Mallon (49 mins), Danny Savage for D Turley (56 mins), Conor Gough for King (57 mins).

Referee: Marty Duffy (Sligo).

Morgan supreme as Tyrone draw the first blood

COLM KEYS



TYRONE	1-13
DONEGAL	0-12

ALLIANZ NFL DIVISION 1

EVEN after the final whistle had blown at Healy Park, the reluctance for some of the players to take a step back was quite apparent.

Sparks had been flying throughout between the McGee brothers in the Donegal full-back line and a coterie of Tyrone forwards, chiefly Stephen O'Neill.

As a little knot of players from either side made their way off the field in the company of two umpires the dialogue continued.

There wasn't much bonhomie between the sides with the date May 26 - when the two teams tussle in the Ulster championship - etched in the minds of everyone.

It may be too strong to suggest that they don't like each other, but, in football terms, there is a deep level of discord running through their rivalry now.

There was quite an undercurrent throughout with regular flashpoints for referee Joe McQuillan to deal with.

Hands were pushed into opposing players' faces and a knees were

dropped into the back of a player in at least one instance as things became overcooked.

Neither side felt an inch could be conceded. In all, McQuillan showed 13 yellow cards, nine to Donegal, and you couldn't make an argument against most of them.

Overall, he controlled the game impressively, punishing attempts from both sides to frequently halt play with overzealous, high tackles. A total of 53 frees, 31 to Donegal, says everything.

The most significant of the cards was a second yellow to Donegal captain Michael Murphy just before half-time as he chased up a rebound following Niall Morgan's brilliant save from his penalty and caught Justin McMahon with his leg.

It was an honest effort to make contact with the ball, but he caught his opponent, nonetheless, forcing McQuillan's hand.

The save and the red card was easily the game's pivotal moment. Instead of being a point down, Tyrone went in at half-time 0-6 to 0-4 ahead with an extra man.

Considering Murphy's importance to Donegal, it put Tyrone firmly in control and they exploited the numerical advantage after the break.

First blood then to Tyrone in a match Mickey Harte subsequently acknowledged they had to win, with that championship date in mind.

"If you keep losing to someone you might get an inferiority complex and that would not be good for anybody - but for sure it was probably

more important for us to win than Donegal," he admitted.

"I think they could handle a defeat better than we could today and I am sure that they will be better prepared in May, because they will have more work put in than they have now."

Conversely, Jim McGuinness (below) reasoned how it wasn't "the biggest hit we're going to take."

"The circumstances unfolded as they did and the game went away from us, but Tyrone looked really sharp. You'd know looking at them that they'd a bit more work done than us. Our hand-passing was very sloppy as was our decision making," he said.

Yet, McGuinness was equally happy to point out that they had scored eight points with 14 men for most of the second half - until Neil Gallagher picked up a second yellow late on for pulling down Sean Cavanagh.

In that context they can be satisfied with how it developed for them. Frank McGlynn, Paddy McGrath and Colm McFadden were only coming back off injuries and they didn't let it get away from them when it threatened midway through the second half as Tyrone kicked on into a 1-10 to 0-7 lead.

Clearly McGuinness will be satisfied to follow the same path into the championship as last year. Relegation from Division 1, it seems, won't discommodate them as they seek to 'road test' a number of options.

"We want to try to win next week and stay in the division, but we also want to be true to ourselves in terms of May 26 and looking at things, looking at players and testing things out and moving towards the summer. We did that last year," he recalled.

POSITION

"We are in the exact same position as we were this time last year, we had two points. It's a matter of being true to yourself in terms of those goals."

"We tried a few things out last year in the league and the answer was definitely that's not going to work."

Neil Gallagher as a full-forward didn't work, but Ross Wherity and Ryan McHugh showed that they can have roles to play in the weeks and months ahead.

For Harte the progression of a more elaborate running game was one of the successes of the afternoon, their ability to run different angles of support a feature of their play.

Niall Morgan's value as a goalkeeper is also soaring. On top of the penalty save there were two frees and a '45' pointed and a sense of security under one particular dropping ball in the second half.

Cavanagh didn't always have his own way against Rory Kavanagh at midfield, but his two points were majestic.

For the most part Joe McMahon operated as a sweeper behind an impressive half-back line where Matthew Donnelly acquitted himself well and Ronan McNamee was also effective.

A two point lead between these rivals has been like gold dust over the last two championship seasons so when Tyrone went three ahead early in the second half through a trademark Joe McMahon long-range effort, Donegal had a mountain to climb.

Tyrone's goal from O'Neill on 40

minutes for a 1-7 to 0-6 lead was a little fortunate as Neil McGee managed to get a block in, but the bounce was unkind behind him and crossed the line.

From that position, Donegal didn't concede any further ground over the next 30 minutes as Tyrone sought to protect what they had.

Winning was what mattered to them. It didn't matter how that goal was achieved as they looked forward to that crucial date in May.

Man of the Match: N Morgan (Tyrone)

SCORERS - Tyrone: S O'Neill 1-2 (ff), N Morgan 0-3 (2f, 1'45), S Cavanagh, P Harte (2f) 0-2 each, R McKenna, Joe McMahon, R McNamee, Mark Donnelly 0-1 each. **Donegal:** C McFadden 0-5 (5f), M Murphy 0-3 (ff), A Thompson, P McBrearty, L McLoone, R Wherity 0-1 each.

TYRONE - N Morgan 9; A McRory 7, C Clarke, 7, Justin McMahon 7; R McKenna 7, Matthew Donnelly 8, R McNamee 8; S Cavanagh 8, M Murphy 5, Mark Donnelly 7, P McNiece 6, Joe McMahon 7; C McAliskey 5, S O'Neill 7, P Harte 6. **Subs:** M Penrose 6 for McAliskey (30), A Cassidy 8 for Murphy (h-t), C Cavanagh 6 for McNiece (55), R O'Neill for Mark Donnelly (62), C Gormley for Justin McMahon (62).

DONEGAL - P Durcan 7; P McGrath 7, N McGee 7, E McGee 7; A Thompson 8, F McGlynn 7, M McHugh 7; M McElhinney 5, R Kavanagh 8; R Wherity 6, L McLoone 7, R Bradley 6; C McFadden 6, N Gallagher 6, M Murphy 8. **Subs:** P McBrearty 6 for McElhinney (h-t), R McHugh 7 for Bradley (48), D Molloy for M McHugh (66).

REF - J McQuillan (Cavan).



Donegal's Neil McGee is yellow-carded

Murphy leaves Kerry 'staring down barrel'

Rampant Donegal pile pressure on as troubled Kingdom slump to yet another dismal defeat

DONEGAL 1-12
KERRY 0-6

Chris McNulty

ALLIANZ NFL DIVISION 1

THESE are troubling times in Kerry - and new manager Eamonn Fitzmaurice says that his team is 'staring down the barrel' after being swatted aside by Donegal in Ballybofey.

Kerry are without a point from their four games and Michael Murphy's brilliance piled the pressure on the Kingdom, who had defender Tomas O Se (right) sent off for an off-the-ball kick on Ryan McHugh in the 40th minute.

With Marc O Se going off injured in the first half and Kieran Donaghy being carried off MacCumhaill Park after the final whistle, the signs are worrying with Kerry now firmly rooted to the basement.

"We've known all along we have a lot of work to do, it's a seriously competitive division and unfortunately now we are staring down the barrel," Fitzmaurice said amid a brief snowfall.

"We just have to keep trying to get that win.

"If we could get two points on the board we are still there and might get a bit of momentum going, but we

just can't seem to get anything and our momentum is going in the wrong direction."

The warning signs were posted early on. Five minutes in, Ross Wherity was bundled over by Johnny Buckley and Michael Murphy stepped up to slam home the penalty.

Murphy dispatched his kick beyond Brendan Kealy to the same side at which he had been denied by Tyrone's Niall Morgan the previous weekend.

The returned Patrick McBrearty was on a mission to impress and his sumptuous effort in the ninth minute had Donegal six ahead. Murphy's paws were all over anything that was good about Donegal.

SHADOWS

A beauty from the shadows of the stand in the 20th minute came after Buckley and Tomas O Se finally broke the Kerry duck.

Murphy might have had a second penalty when he was taken down by Aidan O'Mahony,

but Derek Fahy waved play on.

Donegal's penetrative bursts from deep, with Leo McLoone, Rory Kavanagh, Ryan Bradley and Ryan McHugh all making telling incisions, had Kerry in trouble and at the break Donegal held a 1-5 to 0-3 cushion.

"We were playing the game on their terms rather than ours," reflected Fitzmaurice afterwards.

"I'm definitely not going to be playing a blame game here, we'll go back and analyse it." The analysis will make for painful viewing.

Kerry failed to score in a 28-minute spell from the 25th to the 53rd minutes when Darran O'Sullivan popped over.

By that stage, Murphy, McLoone, Kavanagh and Neil Gallagher had widened the margin to nine, while Tomas O Se saw red just five minutes into the second period.

Kerry's forward line had nothing with which to trouble the Donegal rearguard until Donaghy was sent to the edge of the square.

The horse had bolted by then and at the other end Murphy reminded the 5,000 in attendance of his excellence with a classy score nine minutes from the end.

Buckley had been the one bright light for Kerry and he ended with

three points to his name.

Kerry's afternoon was summed up when they were handed a chance to bring some much-needed respectability back on the scoreboard as Eamon McGee fouled Donaghy for a penalty.

Sub Kieran O'Leary saw his effort brilliantly saved by the legs of Paul Durcan, who moments earlier had thwarted O'Leary with an equally impressive save down low to his left.

With the final kick of the game, Murphy turned the knife in a little deeper with a trademark free that confirmed a nine-point win for Donegal whose manager Jim McGuinness was encouraged by the win.

"I wouldn't say it was perfect," he said, "but we were able to try out a few things. We tried Ryan McHugh at half-back, we tried out Ross Wherity again and we experimented a few other things off the bench too."

The aim of the game for McGuinness is clearly designed towards the championship - and the Donegal boss is unbothered about potentially reaching a league semi-final.

"Nah, not really," he said. "It's not that we don't want to be in the league semi-final, but we want to get out of the league what we set about getting and that's looking at players and at different styles of play. We've managed to get four points on the back of that and hopefully another two will keep us up."

BUILD

"We're just trying to build towards the summer and trying to build the squad. We want to build players and build fitness. Today, we managed to merge all of those things."

Kerry now host Down in a real relegation four-pointer. Fitzmaurice's honeymoon period has well and truly vanished.

There could yet be a return for some of the more stellar Kingdom faces, but there was nothing convincing by their manager when he said that 'maybe' Paul Galvin and maybe Declan O'Sullivan 'might be available' while he sighed that Anthony Maher 'might be okay'.

He said: "We have a lot of work to do, and we are just going to go back at it this week and try and get our house in order. Hopefully we can get a few bodies back and try and be competitive against Down, because it's a massive game for us now."

Man of the match: M Murphy (Donegal)

SCORERS - Donegal: M Murphy 1-5 (1-0 pen, 21), L McLoone 0-2, C McFadden (f), P McBrearty, R Bradley, N Gallagher, R Kavanagh 0-1 each. **Kerry:** J Buckley 0-3 (1f), T O Se, D O'Sullivan, E Brosnan 0-1 each.

DONEGAL - P Durcan 8; P McGrath 7, N McGee 7, E McGee 6; F McGlynn 6, D Walsh 6, R McHugh 6; R Kavanagh 8, N Gallagher 7, R Wherity 6, L McLoone 7, R Bradley 7; P McBrearty 8, M Murphy 9, C McFadden 6. **Subs:** M McElhinney 6 for Wherity (53), D Molloy 6 for McBrearty (55), M Smyth 5 for Kavanagh (61), G McFadden 5 for Gallagher (64).

KERRY - B Kealy 6; M O Se 5, A O'Mahony 5, S Enright 5; T O Se 5, K Young 5, P Crowley 5; K Donaghy 7, E Brosnan 6, J Lyne 5, D Walsh 6, Johnny Buckley 7, J O'Donoghue 5, D O'Sullivan 6, M Geaney 5. **Subs:** B McGuire 5 for M O Se (28), F Fitzgerald 5 for O'Donoghue (47), J Sherwood 5 for Crowley (53), K O'Leary 5 for O'Sullivan (61), A Garnett 5 for Buckley (70).

REF - D Fahy (Longford)



GAA – ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Cork's second half purple patch

CORK 0-12
 DONEGAL 0-10

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT PAIRC UÍ RINN

THIS will not go down as one of the more memorable nights of Jim McGuinness's tenure as Cork held sway in a scrappy, error-ridden League encounter at cool Pairc Uí Rinn on Saturday evening.

Cork hit a seven points in a row in a 20-minute spell in the second half that took them over the line despite a game comeback from Donegal, who had led 0-5 to 0-3 after a largely wasteful first period from both sides.

A game that started at near-Championship feel, ended with an intense air that wouldn't have been amiss at the height of summer, but somewhere in between there was a significant dilution of quality.

"If we had upped our levels ten or fifteen per cent and one of the goal chances had gone in, we'd have got something out of the game"
 – Donegal manager, Jim McGuinness.

Indeed, between the 12th and 37th minutes, there was just one point scored – a point from Dermot Molloy that saw Donegal take a 0-5 to 0-3 lead into the dressing rooms at the midway juncture.

Cork turned it around, though, and the game ended with Donegal throwing everything they had, but it was in vain.

The game was tempered by a suspected cruciate injury to ace forward Colm O'Neill, which marred a useful win for Cork against the All-Ireland champions.

It was in the 18th minute when O'Neill fetched a ball close to the left touchline and he awkwardly keeled over, clearly in agony as he left the field on a stretcher. O'Neill has twice previously – in 2008 and 2011 – suffered cruciate injuries on his right knee.

The Ballyclough man 'will undergo a scan in the next few days', Cork offi-

Patrick McBrearty point.

Colm McFadden restored a two-point cushion for Donegal with a free after he'd been fouled himself, but Barry O'Driscoll responded in the 12th minute for what would prove to be Cork's final score of what was a frustrating opening half for the hosts.

Donegal, for their part, didn't make much headway either and they would manage just one further score themselves – a brilliant effort by Dermot Molloy in the 23rd minute.

Declan Walsh and Colm McFadden carved the chance with Molloy lethally pulling the trigger from the chalk of the '45.

Molloy's inclusion was the only change to the Donegal team from that which had beaten Kerry in Ballybofey the previous weekend. Ryan McHugh was the man to make way for Molloy, who came in for his first Donegal start since a League defeat to Laois last February.

The teams were level by the 12th minute of the second half, when Liam Shorten popped over after a good move by the home team.

Paul Kerrigan, Paudie Kissane and Mark Collins were previously on the mark as Cork got back on an even keel, with Donncha O'Connor now on as a sub.

In that time, Donegal had two goal chances, both of which fell the way of the St Eunan's player Ross Wherity. First up, in the 29th minute he was set up by Leo McLoone, but the goalkeeper Ken O'Halloran saved well with his legs.

Murphy knocked over a free as McLoone was fouled on the follow-up. Kissane's 40-metre points was hit instantly, but three minutes later Wherity had a sniff again, this time after Murphy and Kavanagh combined. One more, though, O'Halloran's legs denied

him a goal.

The '45 was landed by Murphy, but it was there that the pendulum swung.

Cork led for the first time in the 57th minute when Andrew O'Sullivan smartly fisted over after Kissane's long ball had found Kerrigan. Shorten and Walsh followed that up before Kissane landed the score of the game with a beauty from the touchline 45 metres from the sticks.

It seemed as if it was game, set and match when Collins tapped over a free, but then came Donegal with a late rally.

Murphy (free) and McFadden ('45) took the arrears into three before Murphy was fouled by Cadogan as he bore in on goal. Briefly, it looked as if he'd get a penalty, but the incident was just outside. The foul sparked an incensed reaction with Rory Gallagher, the Donegal assistant manager on the field to protest, but the game's laws decree that the referee's punishment of Cadogan with a yellow card was correct, though incidents here and elsewhere at the end of Saturday's game will surely spark debate on the rules of the game once more.

McFadden tapped over the free, but in the concluding moments there would be no late salvo from Donegal.

"Had we managed to get a result there it would've been a travesty," said the Donegal defender, Eamon McGee.

"We were played off the park and we did a lot of stupid things. We will have to just sit down now on Tuesday night and see where we're at.

"Things started well but we were patchy and that's where we are at right now. We have to be positive of course but we're also going to have to be realistic.

"It's all a learning curve and we realise we've to do a bit of work to restore our fluency to get back to where we were last year."

Things weren't as bad as the 'travesty' McGee said would have evolved had Donegal's comeback been a successful one and for periods they were the better team until that purple patch from Cork proved oh so crucial.

Donegal experimented again with Leo McLoone in the half-back line, Wherity and Neil Gallagher in the forwards at times and, most notably perhaps, Michael Murphy at centre-field with Rory Kavanagh.

Defeat leaves Donegal still needing a win to make sure of their safety, but there was no-one too distressed by the outcome here.

McGee said: "We didn't drop our heads. We kept going and going but did silly things. We're not going to press any panic buttons before May 26."

CORK: Ken O'Halloran; Michael Shields, Jamie O'Sullivan, Eoin Cadogan; Paudie Kissane (0-1), Noel O'Leary, Tomás Clancy; Graham Cauty, Aidan Walsh (0-2); Fintan Gould, Andrew O'Sullivan (0-1), Mark Collins (0-2, 1f); Barry O'Driscoll (0-1), Colm O'Neill (0-2), Paul Kerrigan (0-1). **SUBS:** Liam Shorten (0-2) for O'Neill (18 mins); Donncha O'Connor for Gould (45 mins); Alan O'Connor for J.O'Sullivan (60 mins); Eoin O'Mahony for Cauty (65 mins); Daniel Goulding for A.O'Sullivan (70 mins).

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Declan Walsh, Leo McLoone Frank McGlynn; Rory Kavanagh, Michael Murphy (0-5, 4f, 1'45); Ross Wherity, Ryan Bradley, Neil Gallagher; Patrick McBrearty (0-1), Dermot Molloy (0-1), Colm McFadden (0-3, 2f, 1'45). **SUBS:** Martin McElhinney for Molloy (53 mins); Ryan McHugh for Wherity (53 mins).

Booked: Cork – Donncha O'Connor (66 mins), Eoin Cadogan (70 mins); Donegal – Leo McLoone (31 mins).
Sent off: Cork - none; Donegal - none.

REFEREE: David Coldrick (Meath).

MATCH STATS

CORK v DONEGAL

0	Goals	0
12	Points	10
9	Wides	11
0	45s	2
21	Frees awarded	18
1	Frees scored	6
3	Short efforts	4
2	Yellow cards	1
0	Red cards	0

cialists confirmed yesterday, but the early signs are the worst for the Rebels.

O'Neill had posted two excellent scores for Cork in the first eight minutes to keep his team to within the minimum.

His brace came after a quick-fire start from Donegal saw Murphy post two identical frees, either side of a neat

ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, DIVISION ONE

Donegal no match for Mayo

TOM COMACK
Sports Reporter

DONEGAL are now fighting for their Allianz Football League Division One lives following a four point defeat at the hands of Connacht champions Mayo in Elvery Sports McHale Park in Castlebar.

Mayo.....1-10
Donegal.....0-9

In a bitterly cold day borrowed from a Siberian winter, the Westerners got a measure of compensation for last September's All-Ireland final defeat by Donegal. But even more importantly the win also raised them to four points in the Division One table alongside Donegal and Kerry and kept their top flight status hopes alive going into their last game away to Cork.

The defeat also means that Donegal, too, have to take something from their final game against Dublin in two weeks in Ballybofey. However if Kerry lose to Tyrone in Omagh, also on the last day, could possibly see Donegal survive even if they lose to Dublin.

Overall, this was a poor performance from the All-Ireland champions who only played in fits and starts and looked a good bit behind Mayo in terms of fitness and sharpness.

Mayo dominated for long periods and while Mickey Conroy's goal was the game's decisive score, in terms of possession and control of the game, in truth Mayo should have won with even more to spare.

In a highly tactical encounter, Mayo played Donegal at their own game by adopting a packed defence and breaking from the back at pace and once they doubled up on Michael Murphy, they were always in control.

Donegal lost Anthony Thompson to a second yellow with 15 minutes remaining but more worryingly they also lost Neil McGee, to a nasty knee injury, ten minutes into the second period.

Mayo also finished the game with 14 players when Jason Doherty was shown a second yellow by Marty Duffy five minutes from full-time.

Donegal, who fielded 14 of the All-Ireland team - the injured Karl Lacey the only absentee - started well and despite playing into a biting cold wind blowing down McHale Park, they hit four points to Mayo's one in the opening 11 minutes.

But worryingly they did not score again for the remainder of the half as Mayo took a grip around midfield and Donegal's indiscipline in the tackle allowed Mayo back into the game.

And it was the Westerners who led at half-time, 0-6 to 0-4, with four of their six points coming from close-in frees; three of them off the boot of Cillian O'Connor and one from Kevin McLaughlin, who also split the posts from play while O'Connor also raised a white flag from play.

Michael Murphy (2) and Colm McFadden (2) were the Donegal scorers with one each from placed balls.

Donegal made changes at the break with U-21s Ryan McHugh and Marty O'Reilly introduced for Leo McLoone and Ryan Bradley and they added a bit of sparkle as they got the second half off to a promising start.

O'Reilly, with his first touch, stabbed over from close range as he came in at angle on 37 minutes. And the interval Mayo advantage was wiped out two minutes later when McFadden knocked over after Rory Kavanagh was denied a half goal chance.

With the sides level and the game in the fire O'Connor and Rory Kavanagh traded scores, Kavanagh's effort

a delightful effort on the run after combining with Anthony Thompson on the left side of the park.

And then came the crucial goal, which began with Marty O'Reilly losing control and turned over in front of the Mayo posts and the ball was worked down the field by Keith Higgins and Lee Keegan.

Higgins broke clear and played the ball in front of Michael Conroy, coming in at an angle. He elected to hit the ball first time and with Paul Durcan stranded the ball went in off Durcan's right hand upright.

On a day defences were on top a goal was always going to be a big score and that is how Conroy's 46th minute strike turned out.

While Ryan McHugh and Murphy both clawed the margin back to two points twice in the closing quarter hour, Mayo always had the cushion.

McHugh's strike on 50 minutes after good work by O'Reilly was cancelled out by a fine strike from the raiding Colm Boyle.

And after Murphy, on 62 minutes, kept the door ajar once again, second half substitute Enda Varley finally closed the door with two late points to seal the wins and the much sought after two points by the Westerners.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Declan Walsh; Anthony Thompson, Eamon McGee, Frank McGlynn; Neil Gallagher, Rory Kavanagh (0-1); Mark McHugh, Leo McLoone, Ryan Bradley, Colm McFadden (0-3,1f), Michael Murphy (0-3,2f), Patrick McBrearty. Subs: Ross Wherity for D Walsh (22); Ryan McHugh (0-1) for R. Bradley and Marty O'Reilly (0-1) for L. McLoone (h/t); Ryan Bradley for N.McGee (45 inj); Martin McElhinney for R Wherity (59).

Mayo: David Clarke; Chris Barrett, Ger Cafferkey, Colm Boyle; Lee Keegan, Tom Cuniffee, Colm Boyle (0-1); Barry Moran, Seamus O'Shea; Kevin McLoughlin (0-2,1f), Aidan O'Shea, Cathal Carolan; Cillian O'Connor (0-5,4f), Jason Doherty, Michael Conroy (1-0). Subs: Ritchie Feeney for C. O'Connor (53); Donal Vaughan for K Higgins (58 inj); Enda Varley (0-2) for M. Conroy (61); Brian Gallagher for S. O'Shea (63); Alan Freeman for C.Carolan (69).

Referee: Marty Duffy (Sligo)

Man of the match

Mayo midfielder Barry Moran put in a storming second half performance to pick up the award on a day that the Mayo defence played very well. Mark McHugh worked hard throughout; Rory Kavanagh despite conceding a lot of height and power to the Mayo midfield tried hard while Michael Murphy looked dangerous until double marked while Ryan McHugh and Marty O'Reilly added a spark in the second half.

Football League Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pt
Dublin.....	6	5	0	1	8-92	4-63	+41	10
Tyrone.....	6	5	0	1	4-75	3-69	+9	10
Kildare	6	4	0	2	9-60	5-80	-8	8
Cork	6	3	0	3	6-63	4-74	-5	6
Mayo.....	6	2	0	4	2-76	5-65	+2	4
Donegal	6	2	0	4	2-68	4-62	0	4
Kerry	6	2	0	4	1-50	5-58	-20	4
Down	6	1	0	5	3-59	5-72	-19	2
Dublin	1-15	Down	0-9					
Kerry	0-11	Cork	0-7					
Mayo	1-10	Donegal	0-9					
Kildare	0-10	Tyrone	1-13					

Next Up

Sunday, Apr 7th - Down v Kildare, Páirc Esler, Newry, 3pm; Cork v Mayo, Páirc Uí Chacairth, 3pm; Tyrone v Kerry, Omagh, 3pm; Donegal v Dublin, Ballybofey, 3pm.

Relegation 'not a big issue' for Donegal

COLM KEYS

DONEGAL	1-10
DUBLIN	0-13

AT THE END, Jim McGuinness had the consolation that this was the league. And Donegal don't like the league very much, he proclaimed.

It's more a hindrance than a help in his eyes. So at least their return to Division 2, two years after earning promotion in McGuinness' first season as manager, has a value in offering a better environment to calibrate future championship preparations.

The visit of Dublin to Ballybofey, eight weeks out from their championship opener against Tyrone, was badly timed.

Donegal had already 'pressed the button' for their defence on Tuesday last and, according to McGuinness, trained intensely three times in the week before this match.

Even Colm McFadden, he conceded, had to withdraw at half-time because of cramp associated with the consequences of 'lift off'.

So if relegation was a by-product of that schedule, then they would live with that.

Paul Mannion's late equaliser for Dublin, coupled with away victories for Kerry and Mayo in Tyrone and Cork,



condemned Donegal to their fate in a dramatic conclusion to Division 1.

A big deal for the All-Ireland champions?

"It's not the end of the world. It doesn't make a difference to us because we don't really like the league to be honest with you," was McGuinness' frank admission, in perfect harmony with everything he has said over the last two months.

Balancing preparations with trying to winning games is a difficult tightrope to negotiate.

"We try to ease them down a bit and bring them back up and have them fresh for championship, and it's very hard to balance that with winning games in the league, particularly in Division 1, so it's not a big issue for us," he said.

REBUILDING

"We'll rebuild in Division 2, not that we'd be rebuilding, but it'll be easier on us in terms of the opposition that we'll be playing. It'll give us a chance to roll out our annual plan a lot easier than it would this year and last year.

"I have no problem with that and we have no problem with being relegated."

McGuinness knows that the candle can't be burned at both ends.

There was a caveat however, a little glint of frustration in McGuinness, maybe even anger, lurking behind the veneer of acceptance.

His players, he admitted, were "shell-shocked" at how it unfolded.

"They felt they did enough to win the game. A lot of stuff went on there that didn't add up," he figured.

McGuinness has a policy of not directly commenting on the performances of referees but he hinted at dissatisfaction here.

Could he elaborate? "You saw the game. You can report on it how you see fit."

Referee Padraig Hughes twisted his knee so badly around the 43rd minute that he had to be stretchered off and was replaced by Michael Duffy, forcing a lengthy delay. Duffy did not endear himself to the locals in a crowd of around 8,000.

The most obvious point of contention was a challenge by Dublin substitute Jason Whelan on Rory Kavanagh in the 60th minute for which there were very strong penalty claims as the hosts led by 1-8 to 0-10. But it was deemed legitimate.

The most disappointing aspect for Donegal, apart from some of those decisions, was that they had controlled the game for so long, albeit deep in their own territory. They led for all but the three minutes after Mannion's seventh-minute equaliser from a free. Significantly, however, they didn't score from play in the second half.

McFadden's 10th-minute goal, courtesy of Paddy McBrearty's willingness to run at a vulnerable Kevin O'Brien, gave Donegal an edge on the scoreboard that they retained until Mannion's late kick.

It allowed them to absorb pressure, drop the numbers and apply the pressure in their own half that is normally associated with their summer activities. In effect, play the game on their terms.

On an arid, dusty MacCumhail Park, far removed from the lush Croke Park

sward they have become so accustomed to, Dublin struggled for fluency.

Some tried too hard, others eased the level of effort in a wind-assisted first half - and it amounted to their poorest 35 minutes of the campaign.

The two players that Jim Gavin has given leases of life to were the exceptions. Johnny Cooper made a sufficient nuisance of himself against Michael Murphy, restricting Donegal's captain to just three frees, while Paddy Andrews had the composure in a headless attack to put over three points in the first half.

But Diarmuid Connolly, drafted in late for Bryan Cullen, Paul Flynn and Michael Darragh Macauley were among the members of the establishment who struggled. All three were eventually replaced, with Cullen adding some badly needed direction.

In mitigation, Dublin were already qualified for the semi-finals and there was a leg weariness evident at times that suggested that McGuinness wasn't the only one 'pressing buttons' in the last two weeks.

But Gavin clearly demanded improvement at the break, when they were fortunate to be just 1-6 to 0-6 behind. Had McBrearty and McFadden been more clinical, Donegal would have been much further ahead.

As it was, Dublin had a target and they went for it. Mannion was more productive with his possession and as the frees came their way he nailed them.

Yet Donegal looked compact in defence and should have reaped more from hitting Dublin on the break. Ross Wherity had a shot blocked by Stephen Cluxton on 55 minutes before

Kavanagh's penalty claim from a similar break off substitute Marty O'Reilly.

Dublin's best chance looked to have gone when Paul Durcan advanced to save smartly from Whelan.

But Mannion struck late to tip Donegal off the tightrope.

Man of the Match: Paul Mannion (Dublin)
SCORERS - Donegal: C McFadden 1-2 (0-2fs), M Murphy (2fs), P McBrearty (2fs) 0-3 each, M McHugh, R Bradley 0-1 each.
Dublin: P Mannion 0-6 (5fs), P Andrews 0-3, S Cluxton (1'45'), C O'Sullivan, J McCaffrey, D Connolly (f) 0-1 each.
DONEGAL - P Durcan 8; F McGlynn 6, E McGee 7, E Doherty 5, L Keane 6, L McLoone 6, A Thompson 7; R Kavanagh 7, R Bradley 7; M McHugh 7, M McElhinney 5, R Wherity 6; C McFadden 6, M Murphy 6, P McBrearty 7. Subs: D McNeill 5 for McFadden (h-t), M O'Reilly 6 for McElhinney (46), D McLaughlin for McNeill (67).
DUBLIN - S Cluxton 7; K O'Brien 5, J Cooper 8, P McMahon 6; J McCaffrey 7, D Daly 7, G Brennan 6; MD MacAuley 5, C O'Sullivan 7; P Flynn 5, T Brady 5, D Connolly 5; P Mannion 8, P Andrews 8, K McManamon 5. Subs: J Whelan 5 for Flynn (ht), B Cullen 7 for Brady (h-t), D Bastick 5 for McAuley (55), D Rock 5 for Connolly (57), M Fitzsimons for Brennan (63).
REF - P Hughes (Armagh) replaced by Michael Duffy (Stiopa) in 45th minute.



ALLIANZ NFL DIVISION 1

Down	3-13	Kildare	1-12
Mayo	0-11	Cork	0-10
Kerry	1-16	Tyrone	2-12
Donegal	1-10	Dublin	0-13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DPts
Dublin	7	5	1	1	8-105	5-73	41 11
Tyrone	7	5	0	2	6-67	4-85	8 10
Kildare	7	4	0	3	10-72	8-93	-15 8
Mayo	7	3	0	4	2-67	5-75	3 6
Cork	7	3	0	4	6-73	4-85	6 6
Kerry	7	3	0	4	2-66	7-70	-19 6
Donegal	7	2	1	4	3-78	4-75	0 5
Down	7	2	0	5	6-72	6-84	-12 4

NFL DIVISION 3

Monaghan	3-15	Antrim	0-13
Sligo	1-12	Wicklow	0-11
Meath	2-12	Fermanagh	0-14
Roscommon	2-14	Cavan	1-7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DPts
Monaghan	7	5	0	2	10-85	6-63	34 10
Meath	7	5	0	2	9-84	3-90	12 10
Fermanagh	7	4	1	2	5-93	7-69	18 8
Roscommon	7	4	1	2	5-75	8-61	5 9
Cavan	7	3	1	3	6-77	7-71	3 7
Sligo	7	2	1	4	7-69	4-91	-13 5
Antrim	7	1	2	4	5-76	10-86	-25 4
Wicklow	7	0	2	5	6-66	8-94	-34 2

NFL DIVISION 2

Derry	2-17	Westmeath	1-5
Louth	1-14	Longford	1-8
Laois	0-14	Wexford	1-8
Armagh	0-21	Galway	1-12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DPts
Derry	7	5	1	1	5-112	5-74	38 11
Westmeath	7	5	1	1	9-76	6-87	-2 11
Laois	7	4	1	2	5-94	6-75	16 9
Louth	7	3	1	3	9-87	7-89	4 7
Galway	7	3	1	3	6-88	5-96	-5 7
Armagh	7	2	2	3	8-89	7-94	-2 6
Wexford	7	2	1	4	8-74	11-87	-22 5

GAA - ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINAL

Clinical Donegal sweep away Tyrone challenge

DONEGAL 2-10
TYRONE 0-10

BY CHRIS MCNULTY IN BALLYBOFEY
PHOTOS BY DONNA MCBRIDE

WHEN this game was in the melting pot, it was Donegal who rolled their sleeves up and got to work in style.

The Ulster and All-Ireland champions lowered Tyrone's colours in sending out a huge note of their intentions for 2013 with a dominant second half display.

Colm McFadden and Ross Wherity scored the goals as Donegal defeated the Red Hands for the third year in a row.

It was billed as being a grudge match of sorts and this was confirmation, if indeed it were needed, that Donegal are very much Ulster's top dogs right now.

They took everything Tyrone threw at them and, as they have done through Jim McGuinness's tenure, pressed the button in the third quarter.

The teams were level five minutes into the second half, but by the 53rd minute Donegal moved five clear.

The defining score came in the 49th minute. Patrick McBrearty, who was excellent throughout, surged

past Dermot Carlin and a weak effort by Martin Penrose to stop him was navigated. McBrearty slipped the ball across the square for Wherity to palm home.

The St Eunan's man was introduced as a sub for his Championship debut and with his first touch he was on the mark in style. It was the perfect way to celebrate his birthday weekend having turned 25 the previous day.

Wherity was sent on along with Karl Lacey in the 47th minute.

The 2012 Footballer of the Year didn't start, but came on to a thunderous reception and his presence here was key as Donegal turned the screw. Right after the second goal, Donegal added quick fire points from McBrearty and Michael Murphy.

Tyrone fell to pieces and Donegal kept the Red Hands scoreless for a thirty-minute spell. Their discipline went too and they had Joe McMahon sent off when he was booked for the second time in the 63rd minute.

Donegal had prepared for this game since the pairing was made. The squad assembled at Mac-Cumhaill Park on Saturday and spent Saturday night in the Sandhouse Hotel in Rossnowlagh.

This was a game they did not want to lose and a day on which they were determined to lay down a marker. This, they did. With Lacey and Mark McHugh in as subs. Donegal could

Neil McGee at full pelt. The Gaoth Dobhair man was barely put off his stride. As tough as the face of Errigal, a clash with McGee meant O'Neill was on his rear end.

Or there was the sheer ferocity of Paul Durcan's reaction at the final whistle; a moment that outlined what this game meant to Donegal, the Four Masters man howling into the rain-soaked sky after an emphatic win by his team.

It was a day when McBrearty was very impressive, the 19-year old having had to endure a difficult few weeks after the incident that led to Croke Park launching a probe into allegations that he was bitten during the League meeting with Dublin. 'Head melting,' McBrearty called it post-match - but it was Tyrone heads that melted here on an afternoon of Donegal delight.

even afford to be dominated at centrefield, where Conor Gormley took a couple of excellent fetches.

Declan Walsh and David Walsh were the men to come into the starting XV, in place of McHugh and Lacey. What had been a tight battle opened up when Donegal began to take command in front of a packed house as the rain teemed down.

The game was one of several seminal incidents. Not least of them was that moment in the 24th minute when Stephen O'Neill thundered into

Colm McFadden again demonstrated his prowess as a Championship player, the St Michael's man stepping up with a clinical 1-3. It was McFadden who swung over the game's first point from a free in the second minute and it was he who netted the opening goal in the 32nd minute.

McBrearty batted down a Murphy free and McFadden got away from Cathal McCarron before sliding past Niall Morgan with his right foot.

It was not a day that Morgan will wish to remember.

The goalkeeper's place-kicking was predicted as the key for Tyrone. Morgan would rue his gesturing to a crowd that had jeered an earlier miss when he scored one in the 19th minute.

Six times, Morgan stepped forth but just once he scored. Four of them he shot wide and one he dropped short into Durcan's hands.

Morgan's short effort was from around 55 metres and right after McFadden's goal Murphy came up from a similar distance and sailed it over the black spot to give Donegal a 1-6 to 0-7 interval lead.

Donegal were 0-4 to 0-1 up after just seven frantic minutes with McFadden (2), Murphy and David Walsh on the mark. Tyrone's opener was hit by Conor McAliskey and Morgan's score brought Tyrone to within one.

McFadden pushed Donegal two ahead, but Tyrone led for the first time after Stephen O'Neill majestically shot over from the stand side and then two in a minute by Matthew Donnelly and Colm Cavanagh turned the tables.

McFadden's goal restored the lead for Donegal and despite Tyrone started brightly in the second half it wasn't long before Donegal took control in devastating fashion.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Anthony Thompson; Declan Walsh, Eamon McGee, Frank McGlynn; Rory Kavanagh (0-1) Neil Gallagher; Ryan Bradley, Leo McLoone, David Walsh (0-1); Patrick McBrearty (0-2), Michael Murphy (0-3, 2f), Colm McFadden (1-3, 2f). Subs: Mark McHugh for McGlynn (21 mins), Martin O'Reilly for Bradley (half-time), Martin McElhinney for David Walsh (42 mins), Karl Lacey for Thompson (47 mins), Ross Wherity (1-0) for McLoone (47 mins).

Tyrone: Niall Morgan (0-1, 1f); PJ Quinn, Conor Clarke, Cathal McCarron; Conor Gormley, Justin McMahon (0-1), Matthew Donnelly (0-2); Colm Cavanagh (0-1), Joe McMahon; Mark Donnelly, Sean Cavanagh (0-2, 1f), Peter Harte; Martin Penrose, Stephen O'Neill (0-1), Conor McAliskey (0-1). SUBS: Dermot Carlin for Quinn (half-time), Aidan Cassidy for Justin McMahon (55 mins), Kyle Coney (0-1) for Mark Donnelly (60 mins).

Referee: Joe McQuillan (Cavan).



ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL - DONEGAL V DOWN

Colm McFadden on fire in the second half while Mark McHugh runs his heart out in Kingspan Breffni Park

THE DONEGAL BANDWAGON ROLLS ON

DONEGAL	0-12
DOWN	0-9

PETER CAMPBELL
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In a war of attrition, Donegal just scraped through to their third Ulster final in-a-row with a narrow victory at Kingspan Breffni Park.

The 21,715 patrons were not treated to a great spectacle, but the game was in the balance until the final whistle by Eddie Kinsella. Donegal always had the lead, which never dipped below two points, but they could not shake off a Down side that could easily have been closer, with their forwards shot shy at times, especially Benny Coulter.

In the end it was the scoring power of Colm McFadden and Michael Murphy, who both hit five points, allied to a great work ethic, not least from Mark McHugh, who covered every blade of the pitch and used the ball very well.

With heavy rain before the game, conditions were very difficult. It didn't help

that both teams used massed defences which led to many turnovers on both sides.

Donegal started much the better with four points on the board by the 13 minute mark, Michael Murphy and Colm McFadden sharing the scoring, from frees and play.

Down can thank Donal O'Hare for eventually getting on the scoreboard as he found the range from two frees by the 18th minute, one of them courtesy of the ball being moved on for Donegal dissent.

Michael Murphy and an excellent effort from Patrick McBrearty stretched the Donegal lead to 0-6 to 0-2 by the 22nd minute, but they then failed to raise a flag in the final 16 minutes.

Down began to win turnovers and Donal O'Hare (free) and Mark Poland had them back within two with five minutes of the half left.

It also took a magnificent block by Paddy McGrath at the expense of a '45' to deny one Down attack.

Amazingly, there was only one wide recorded in the opening half, Ambrose Rogers off target midway through the half.

Michael Murphy's quick brain allowed Rory Kavanagh to fire over the first point of the second half inside a minute but Donal O'Hare cancelled that score after Benny Coulter was fouled.

On four more occasions in the remaining 28 minutes, Donegal went three points clear, only for Down to pull the margin back to two on each occasion. Murphy and McFadden shared those four points and it was the Glenswilly man who had the final point a minute from the end of normal time with a wonderful free kick from 55m. Murphy had converted a similar free earlier only for the referee to bring it forward with the ball in the air, but he still found the range from the shorter distance.

Donal O'Hare (2), Jerome Johnston and Danny Savage were the Down scorers in that period.

In the end Donegal just about deserved the win, but it took a huge effort to get them over the line with the McGees again outstanding while Anthony Thompson, Rory Kavanagh and substitutes Ryan McHugh and Martin O'Reilly

also playing their part.

Down will be hugely disappointed that their forwards did not have their shooting boots on.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Declan Walsh, Frank McGlynn, Anthony Thompson; Ryan Bradley, Rory Kavanagh (0-1); David Walsh, Leo McLoone, Mark McHugh; Patrick McBrearty (0-1) Michael Murphy (0-5,4f), Colm McFadden (0-5,2f). Subs., Martin O'Reilly for David Walsh, Martin McElhinney for Bradley, both 33; Ryan McHugh for McGlynn ht; Ross Wherity for McLoone 45; Dermot Molloy for McBrearty 65.

Down: Brendan McVeigh; Daniel McCartan, Brendan McArdle, Keith Quinn; Declan Rooney, Peter Turley, Ryan Boyle; Kalum King, Kevin McKernan; Ambrose Rogers, Mark Poland (0-1), Niall Madine; Conor Laverty, Brendan Coulter, Donal O'Hare (0-6,5f). Subs., Ryan Mallon for Quinn 47; Jerome Johnston (0-1) for Coulter 57; Danny Savage (0-1,f) for Madine 62

Referee: Eddie Kinsella (Laois)



Ryan McHugh, making his debut, gets away from Conor Laverty.



MAN OF THE MATCH

The award goes to Mark McHugh for a magnificent overall performance. He gets the nod just ahead of Colm McFadden.

Ryan McHugh: In at half-time for Frank McGlynn, McHugh, making his championship debut, contributed handsomely to the win. 7.5

Patrick McBrearty: Double and triple teamed, McBrearty tried his best to get into the action and hit a great first half point. 7

TURNING POINT

When it was touch and go in the second half, Colm McFadden hit a couple of great points to edge Donegal three clear. Michael Murphy's two second half frees were also vital in a very close contest. Those two forwards showed the way accounting for all but two of their scores. This duo along with Mark McHugh and Rory Kavanagh were the main outlets for Donegal when times were tough

REF WATCH

In the very difficult conditions, Laois referee Eddie Kinsella had a very good game, doing his best to keep play flowing while also trying to keep control in a game that was physical from start to finish.

TALKING POINT

One of the big talking points of the game was the fact that Down played two sweepers for most of the game in front of their full-back line.

Ulster SFC Final

Monaghan deservedly beat Donegal at their own game to bring a long wait to an end

Malachy O'Rourkes' side make All-Ireland champions looks flat and uninspired

Kieran Hughes proves heroic in attack as Monaghan's well-drilled defence excels



Malachy Clerkin
in Clones

Monaghan 0-13
Donegal 0-7

How they deserved their solitude. After all, they had just pulled off a win that they alone had imagined possible. They made Donegal look like they have never looked under Jim McGuinness – flat, uninspired, totally lacking in intensity. The final margin was six points but as Dick Clerkin said afterwards,

Talking point Donegal sub par

Donegal were so flat as to be unrecognisable from the team that stormed to last year's All-Ireland. McGuinness had to make four substitutions by half-time and still they couldn't match Monaghan's intensity.

they could have played on for another two hours and Donegal wouldn't have got within a goal of them.

This wasn't supposed to happen but then the day encompassed a long list of presumed impossibilities. Monaghan kept

the most vaunted full-forward line in the game scoreless from play. They didn't concede a score of any hue for the opening half hour. They outscored Donegal by three points in the first half and then did the same in the second. And along the way they won their first Ulster title since 1988.

From the very beginning, they set about Donegal much in the manner of Donegal themselves. Anytime they lost possession, they funnelled everyone back behind the ball and sent Donegal running down alleyways.

In the full-back line, Drew Wylie kept Colm McFadden away from possession and Colin Walshe erased any influence Patrick McBreaty would have hoped to have. Michael Murphy got a little joy as the game progressed but even he lost his battle with Vinny Corey in the end. It was that sort of day.

Aerial prowess

At the other end of the pitch, Monaghan got on top early through the outstanding Kieran Hughes. Often a flighty enough presence, he was heroic for Monaghan yesterday. Their tactic of sending long early ball into him took advantage of his aerial prowess and he made Eamonn McGee's life a misery.

His brother Darren opened the scoring in the first minute

and Monaghan followed up quickly with frees from goalkeeper Rory Beggan and McManus. Pádraig Donaghy stuck a fine score from distance on eight minutes to make it 0-4 to 0-0 and almost immediately Mark McHugh had to leave the field with concussion after a collision with Stephen Golligly. It was the end of Golligly's day too but Donegal certainly felt the bigger loss.

McHugh's absence meant that time and again Monaghan were able to fire clean ball into the full-forward line. Their one big worry was their inability to confirm their dominance on the scoreboard.

Hughes, Corey, McManus and Dessie Mone all had poor wides before half-time and it was only equally wayward shooting from Donegal that kept them in breathing space.

Donegal's first point came through a McFadden free in the 32nd minutes and it was only when Frank McGlynn followed up with their second in injury-time at the end of the half that they looked anything like the Donegal of last year.

It was the one time they managed to put a move together that went the length of the field, the only time they got around the well-drilled blanket defence that Malachy O'Rourke has devised.

Lightfire

If anyone thought the interval was going to light a fire under Donegal or cause Monaghan to wilt, they were mistaken. Kieran Hughes kicked three brilliant points from play in the first 10 minutes of the second half and from there to the end, only one team looked like they had any conviction about them. Driven on by huge performances from Mone, Dermot Malone and Darren Hughes, Monaghan were hungrier and they were ultimately better.

Donegal looked clueless in attack, so much so that long before the end their main tactic consisted of planting Murphy on the edge of the square to chase goals. But despite a couple of close shaves when McGlynn and Murphy caused confusion under the high ball, Beggan's goal survived intact. O'Rourke threw Tommy Freeman on for the last two minutes and

their most recent All Star scored the last point of the day before the pitch turned white.

"They got their tactics working very, very quickly," said McGuinness afterwards. "We were finding it very difficult to find space. Monaghan made the breakthrough today and you wouldn't deny the people and the players of Monaghan that opportunity. It's absolutely incredible to be part of a day

like this and we were very fortunate over the last two years to experience it. And it's up to these people now to experience it and enjoy it."

After 25 years, that will not be a problem.

MONAGHAN: RBeggan (0-2, one free, one 45); K Duffy, D Wylie, C Walshe, V Corey, N McAdam, D Mone (0-1); O Lennon, D Hughes (0-1), P Fintay, S Golligly, D Malone, P Donaghy (0-1), K Hughes (0-3), C McManus (0-3, three frees). Subs: G Doogan for Golligly (11 mins), D Clerkin for Doogan (51 mins), C McGuinness (0-1) for Malone (65 mins), T Freeman (0-1) for McManus (71 mins).
DONEGAL: P Durcan, P McGrath, N McGee, E McGee, F McGlynn (0-1), K Lacey, A Thompson, R Kavanagh (0-1), R Bradley, M O'Reilly, L McLoone, M McHugh, P McBreaty, M Murphy, C McFadden (0-4, all frees). Subs: David Walsh for McHugh (11 mins), N Gallagher for O'Reilly (23 mins), R Wherity for McLoone (32 mins), R McElhinney for Bradley (35 mins), M Referee: D Coldrick (Meath).

GAA - ALL-IRELAND SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 4 QUALIFIER

DONEGAL 0-14
LAOIS 0-08

BY CHRIS MCNULTY
AT PAIRC SEAN MACDIARMADA

THE murky world of the All-Ireland qualifiers is no place for demanding perfection.

What Donegal gave on Saturday evening in claustrophobic Carrick-On-Shannon was a performance that was far from perfect, but at least there were plenty of signs of improvement.

Most especially when faced with the dreaded six-day turnaround following a provincial final defeat comes the focus to the bottom line: the result.

Here, Donegal were never in any real trouble, but there were moments when there were wobbles, but the All-Ireland champions regained composure and managed to close out the game well to send them hurtling back to Croke Park for an All-Ireland quarter-final meeting with Mayo.

There were times when the huge Donegal support had to peer through the gaps in their fingers, but they woke yesterday looking forward to Croke Park.

The perfection can wait. First, Donegal just had to win and get the

Ulster final defeat by Monaghan out of their system.

"The best thing that ever happened us was a six-day turnaround," said an encouraged Jim McGuinness afterwards.

"We didn't 14 days and we didn't want to be licking our wounds for three weeks. We wanted to get back at it. We know what's in the dressing room. We know what they've done over the last couple of years and we just wanted to get back playing football."

Four late scores from Colm McFadden, Patrick McBrearty, Neil McGee and Leo McLoone polished the scoreboard for Donegal while Laois' evening ended sourly with Conor Meredith sent off. Marty Duffv right-

ly giving him a straight red card for what was a needless and dangerous hit on Rory Kavanagh.

While the end scoreline did flatter Donegal, the way they picked off those last four points was one of the bright points on an evening when 11,125 - the vast majority of them from Donegal - packed into compact Pairc Sean MacDiarmada.

McFadden was back with the deadly shooting boots on again, the St Michael's man kicking six points, while McBrearty added three points to a fine performance that saw him return to his determined best with the McGees back to their best in defence, too. Neil Gallagher stood tall at centrefield, David Walsh was busy, while they had real platforms in Ryan McHugh and Frank McGlynn.

McHugh was making his first ever Senior Championship start and he was far from fazed, more than justifying his selection in fact. His inclusion was one of four changes to the side from that which was beaten by Monaghan. Gallagher, Declan Walsh and David Walsh were all in from the off here with the injured Mark McHugh joined in having a watching brief by Martin O'Reilly, Leo McLoone and Karl Lacey, who came on for the final 16 minutes.

After seeing Monaghan toy with Donegal in some departments, Laois came into Carrick-On-Shannon eyeing an upset. Justin McNulty set up a defensive wall inside his '45 that was designed to frustrate and restrict Donegal in their attempts. To a degree, it worked, but only for a while.

Just two scores - one apiece - were posted in the opening 22 minutes with Colm McFadden's eleventh-minute free cancelled out by a Ross Munnely point that was Laois' only score of the first half.

As an art, it was not pleasing to watch, but this was Laois' plan. Laois themselves had opportunities, but they were left looking to the sky when a fortunate loose ball spilled away and

into the path of a Laois man with a sight of goal. With a goal chance presenting itself, full-back Mark Timmons snatched at the effort and it was gone.

David Walsh fired Donegal in front - and this time it was a lead they wouldn't give up for the remainder of the contest. Walsh popped over after a patient piece of build-up from his side while a mighty point from Michael Murphy out on the right put two between them. Murphy operated at centre forward here and while it was another evening when he was off-colour, the hope remains that he'll be ignited by the sight of Croke Park.

McFadden (free) curled over another during a period when Duffy's pencil was tested as a glut of yellow cards appeared. In stoppage time, McBrearty angled over a magnificent score from an acute position. It was a deserved point for the Kilcar man after a first half display of high work-rate and willingness to take responsibility beyond his years.

Qualifiers are a do-or-die breed. On nights like this, they are not for the faint hearted.

So puzzled are people by Donegal's recent form that the Kerry manager, Eamon Fitzmaurice, opted to head for Carrick-On-Shannon to eye up Donegal rather than take in three other potential opponents at the Croke Park triple-header. Such is the complexity, Fitzmaurice wished to view it for himself.

With the big crowd packed into a small, tight, provincial venue, the atmosphere simmered at times, not least when the management teams got embroiled in some jostling. After Michael Murphy was taken out by John O'Loughlin, Donegal were incensed. Managers McGuinness and McNulty and their henchmen, Rory Gallagher and Fergal Byron, exchanged views, before tempers finally tempered.

Meredith pulled one back for Laois, but there was a sense that Donegal were going to kick for home when McFadden won and pointed a free off

Paul Begley and themn Murphy tacked on a free after full-back Neil

McGee burst up only to be fouled by Colm Boyle.

A pair of points from Munnely, ever-dangerous and with the spark of old back again, ensured that Laois weren't surrendering, but again Donegal hit back, McFadden calmly finding the range with a free and McBrearty exquisitely pointing under stern pressure after David Walsh forced a turnover and McFadden turned provider.

Still, Laois weren't giving up. Donal Kingston and McFadden traded points and there were five between them. McFadden arched over a point that was down to Eamon McGee's brilliant defensive work and a majestic pick up by Anthony Thompson.

Karl Lacey's introduction in the 54th minute raised the roof from the Donegal faithful, but it was Laois who seemed to get a leash of life, as Kingston pointed from distance and David Conway got up to thump over. When Munnely tapped over a free seven minutes from the end, there were rumblings of doubt sweeping across the park.

The richter scale felt another tremor when, just for a second, it seemed as if Kieran Lillis effort that dropped short had been fumbled by Paul Durcan, who recovered his balance to off-load again.

Donegal then found their gears to finish well. McFadden slotted over in style and McBrearty curled in to open

up a four-point cushion.

Up came Neil McGee on one of those lung-bursting runs in the final minute to get a point while sub Leo McLoone applied the finishing touch, just after Meredith's red mist had descended.

The encouraging signs were here again, but there'll need to be another rung of progression found before they run out for the headline act on Sunday: a repeat of the All-Ireland final against Mayo in a last eight encounter should be enough to rise the mercury, though.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee (0-1), Anthony Thompson; Declan Walsh, Frank McGlynn, Paddy McGrath; Rory Kavanagh, Neil Gallagher; David Walsh (0-1), Michael Murphy (0-2, 1f), Ryan Bradley; Patrick McBrearty (0-3), Colm McFadden (0-6, 4f), Ryan McHugh.

Subs: Karl Lacey for McGrath (54 mins), Martin McElhinney for Bradley (66 mins), Leo McLoone (0-1) for David Walsh (67 mins), Daniel McLaughlin for Declan Walsh (70 mins).

LAOIS: Eoin Culliton; Paul Begley, Mark Timmons, Peter O'Leary; Darren Strong, Kieran Lillis, Pádraig McMahon; Pádraig Clancy, John O'Loughlin; Ross Munnely (0-4, 2f), Billy Sheehan, Colm Begley; Conor Meredith (0-1), Donal Kingston (0-2), Evan O'Carroll.

Subs: Conor Boyle for Clancy (27 mins), Stephen Attride for O'Carroll (31 mins), Denis Booth for Begley (43 mins), David Conway (0-1) for O'Leary (52 mins), Colm Kelly for Sheehan (67 mins).

Booked: Donegal - Colm McFadden (15 mins), Michael Murphy (32 mins), Paddy McGrath (51 mins), Eamon McGee (53 mins); Laois - Paul Begley (15 mins), Conor Meredith (21 mins), Mark Timmons (28 mins), John O'Loughlin (34 mins), David Conway (60 mins). Sent off: Donegal - none; Laois - Conor Meredith (70 mins).

REFEREE: Marty Duffy (Sligo)

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v LAOIS		
0	Goals	0
14	Points	8
5	Wides	7
1	45s	0
16	Frees awarded	18
5	Frees scored	2
3	Short efforts	4
4	Yellow cards	5
0	Red cards	0

ATTENDANCE 11,125

GAA - ALL-IRELAND SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINAL

DONEGAL 1-10
MAYO 4-17

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT CROKE PARK

THE scoreline is one that will ring loudly in Donegal for quite some time.

Not since 1946 has a Donegal team felt the pang of a 16-point loss in Championship football. The scary thing here was that this could have been worse - much worse.

But for the 1-4 they scored in the final ten minutes, Donegal were heading for a defeat that was not too far away from their record Championship defeat - the 23-point hammering (5-12 to 0-4) by Cavan in 1939.

Under Jim McGuinness, Donegal had only conceded four goals previously in Championship football over three seasons.

Yesterday, Mayo sliced through them at will. Cillian O'Connor helped himself to a hat-trick and Donal Vaughan netted another on a day when James Horan's side ruthlessly exposed the frailties which have dethroned Donegal as Ulster and All-Ireland kings.

In the space of three weeks, Donegal have relinquished their hold on the Anglo-Celt and Sam Maguire.

It wasn't the defeat that hurt here, but more so the manner of it. Mayo blew Donegal apart with Aidan O'Shea lord and master around the middle third and the deadly Cillian

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v MAYO

0	Goals	4
10	Points	17
7	Wides	7
1	45s	1
22	Frees awarded	17
4	Frees scored	2
1	Short efforts	0
1	Yellow cards	3
1	Red cards	1

ATTENDANCE 63,466

Donegal are blown apart by Mayo

O'Connor scoring 3-4.

Donegal were somewhat fortunate to have been 'only' 12 in arrears at the break. Mark McHugh prevented a certain goal when he blocked from O'Connor, while Mayo really ought to have added a third in the final minute of the half.

Sub Cathal Carolan broke through and beat Paul Durcan with a well-drilled low shot that cannoned off the post. Kevin McLoughlin, somehow, skewed the rebound wide with the Canal End net gaping at his mercy.

O'Shea was sent off late in the day having collected a second yellow card, but it shouldn't take away from a top-class display. Donegal defender Eamon McGee was also sent to the line in the 52nd minute for a stamp on Enda Varley.

It was that sort of day Donegal's injury problems have been mounting for some time now. Mark McHugh started yesterday and contributed two points, but Karl Lacey had been kept to a watching brief, though the 2012 Footballer of the Year was called upon with just 23 minutes gone here and the Four Masters man was showing clear signs of a man who remains some way off his optimum.

Jaded Donegal came in on the back of a qualifier win over Laois that they'd hoped had ignited the spark. Being drawn against Mayo for a repeat of the All-Ireland final was a surefire thing to get the blood boiling - and after a week of slogging in the media the camps were set for a real war of attrition.

But Mayo did unto Donegal what Donegal had inflicted on them in September - and worse. O'Connor and Donal Vaughan scored two goals in-

side the opening 13 minutes and from there Donegal were facing a mountain.

Michael Murphy landed a free in the 16th minute that was Donegal's fourth score of the day, but Donegal wouldn't register again until the 48th minute - by which time Mayo were twenty points to the good.

Murphy was Donegal's top marksman with six points as Mayo's tenacious tackling was superb and they kept Patrick McBreaty scoreless and held Colm McFadden blank until he finally hit a goal in the 69th minute.

By contrast, Mayo had thirteen different scorers and only three points of their impressive tally came from placed balls.

Mayo meant business.

Vaughan was everywhere in the early exchanges and it was he who provided the assists for the opening two points, scored by O'Connor and Alan Dillon. The warning signs were posted to the floor in the third minute when Mayo went in search of goal, a long ball into Alan Freeman cut out by the deffest of touches by Paul Durcan.

In the fifth minute, Mayo bagged the opener as Eamon McGee was forced into a turnover and Kevin McLoughlin fed O'Connor who was cool, calm and collected as he rolled into the bottom corner.

Freeman added a point and, with six minutes gone, Mayo held a six-point lead. It was a start akin to that of Monaghan in the Ulster final. Like then, Donegal didn't recover.

Murphy scored two frees either side of a Mark McHugh point to get Donegal underway, but Mayo hit the sucker-punch when Donegal were cut open in the 13th minute. Durcan had to come well off his line, but was beaten to the ball and Vaughan smashed home.

Donegal just couldn't get going and they were rattled as McLoughlin, Andy Moran, Freeman and two from O'Connor widened the margin by the minute before wing-back Colm Boyle got up to put twelve between them at the short whistle (2-10 to 0-4).

The interval will have been an interesting time between the four walls of the Donegal dressing room. Mayo's was a whirlwind that Donegal just couldn't live with, as the tired legs and weary minds began to show.

Seamus O'Shea arched over the opening score of the second half and any hopes of a Donegal comeback were jolted within ten minutes of the re-start. Vaughan broke again in the 40th minute and lifted past the advancing Durcan for O'Connor to finish.

Durcan might have been beaten four times, but he was one player who

could hold the head high here with a fine save denying Lee Keegan another Mayo goal a minute later.

It wasn't long before Mayo were in for a fourth, though, O'Connor smashing home after Moran was denied by a strong-handed save by Durcan. It was the Ballintubber man's second hat-trick in as many games having also netted three times against London in the Connacht final.

When Eamon McGee saw red in the 52nd minute it was perhaps the epitome of the frustrating afternoon that was.

Mayo continued to turn the screw, subs Richie Feeney, Enda Varley and Kevin Keane scoring with Chris Barrett also on the mark.

David Walsh stemmed the tide momentarily with a point and it was only late on when Donegal found a way through. It was much too little, much too late, however.

Murphy, twice, McHugh and Lacey hit points, but Lee Keegan capped a fine afternoon when he clipped over to complete Mayo's scoring. McFadden powered home a goal in the final minute, but it was scant consolation for a side who were dethroned in some fashion.

For the third year in a row, Mayo have taken the scalp of the All-Ireland champions - but here was their credentials for a first All-Ireland since 1951 laid down.

For Donegal, the defeat will surely