

2014

Team Manager: Jim McGuinness

Dr. McKenna Cup

Section A: QUB, Donegal, Tyrone, Armagh

Section B: St Mary's UCB, Fermanagh, Monaghan, Derry

Section C: UUJ, Down, Antrim, Cavan

1	5th Jan: Round 1	Section A	Letterkenny Athletic Grounds	Dún na nGall 1-07	Tír Eoghain 0-13
		Section B	Brewster Park Clones	Ard Mhacha 1-17 Fear Manach 1-10	QUB 0-15 St Marys 3-08
		Section C	Creggan Páirc Esler	Muineachan 2-11 Aontroim 0-12	Doire 2-15 An Cabhán 3-12
2	12th Jan: Round 2	Section A	Athletic Grounds Healy Park	Dún na nGall 1-19	Ard Mhacha 0-11
		Section B	Clones Owenbeg	Tír Eoghain 3-19 Muineachan	QUB 1-08 St Marys
		Section C	Creggan Kingspan	Doire 1-11 Aontroim 1-17	Fear Manach 2-04 UUJ 2-08
3	15th Jan: Round 3	Section A	Páirc MhicCumhaill Healy Park	Dún na nGall 3-17	QUB 3-05
		Section B	Brewster Park Owenbeg	Tír Eoghain Fear Manach	Ard Mhacha Muineachán
		Section C	Páirc Esler Kingspan	Doire An Dún An Cabhán	St Marys Aontroim UUJ
19th Jan:	Semi Final		Section B Winners v Section A Winners		
	Semi Final		Best Runners Up v Section C Winners		
25th Jan:	Final				

Senior Football Championship

4	25 th May	Qtr. final	Celtic Park	Derry	0-11	Donegal	1-11
5	22 nd June	Semi final	Clones	Donegal	3-16	Antrim	0-12
6	20 th July	Ulster final	Clones	Donegal	0-15	Monaghan	1-09
7	9 th Aug	All Ireland Qtr final	Croke Park	Donegal	1-12	Armagh	1-11
8	24 th Aug	All Ireland Semi final	Croke Park	Donegal	3-14	Dublin	0-17
9	21 st Sept.	All Ireland Final	Croke Park	Donegal	0-12	Kerry	2-09

National Football League

Division 1 Cork, Dublin, Kerry, Kildare, Mayo, Tyrone, Westmeath, Derry

Division 2 Armagh, Monaghan, Donegal, Down, Galway, Laois, Louth, Meath

Division 3 Cavan, Fermanagh, Roscommon, Wexford Sligo, Longford, Offaly, Limerick

Division 4 Carlow, Clare, Leitrim, Antrim, London, Tipperary, Wicklow, Waterford

Div 2

10	2 Feb	O' Moore Park	Laois	1-09	Donegal	2-19
11	9 Feb	Pearse Stadium	Galway	0-12	Donegal	1-16
12	2 Mar	O'Donnell Park	Donegal	2-11	Monaghan	0-10
13	9 Mar	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-12	Meath	1-12
14	16 Mar	Páirc Esler	Down	1-09	Donegal	0-10
15	30 Mar	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	1-19	Louth	3-07
16	6 April	Athletic Grounds	Armagh	1-08	Donegal	2-10
17	27 th April	Div 2 Final Croke Park	Donegal	1-10	Monaghan	1-16
	27 th April	Div 1 Final Croke Park	Dublin	3-19	Derry	1-10
	26 th April	Div 3 Final Croke Park	Roscommon	1-17	Cavan	0-18
	26 th April	Div 4 Final Croke Park	Tipperary	1-6	Clare	1-15

POWER NI DR. MCKENNA CUP, SECTION A

TYRONE 'KEEPER HITS THREE POINTS FROM PLACED BALLS

DONEGAL UNDONE

IN FINAL QUARTER

PETER CAMPBELL

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Donegal's start to the 2014 season was not as expected as they succumbed in the final quarter to a young Tyrone side in O'Donnell Park.

Donegal	1-7
Tyrone	0-13

The underfoot conditions were far from ideal, but for three quarters of this game it was a good contest, but the young Tyrone team proved too strong in the final quarter for a Donegal team that had a fair sprinkling of All-Ireland medal winners.

Tyrone were at their best in that final quarter with goalkeeper Niall Morgan

proving a matchwinner with three points from placed balls. Ironically, that was better than the entire return for Donegal in the second period - two points.

The final quarter also saw the only black card of the contest, Rory Kavanagh banished after a late challenge on Tiernan McCann.

There was plenty to ponder for Jim McGuinness and his backroom team. They were experimenting to a degree, especially with kick-outs with both Rory Kavanagh and Odhran MacNiallais breaking to the wings and Michael Murphy filling the gap. It worked at times, but the conditions made it difficult and Durcan was responsible for one Tyrone point with a misplaced kick to Patrick McNiece in the 54th minute.

As for the newcomers to the Donegal side, Darach O'Connor showed up really well in the opening half and made a nuisance of himself, resulting in winning a penalty. Odhran MacNiallais had a very good opening half also while Eamonn Doherty and Dermot Molloy also enhanced their reputations

Donegal had just 21 players togged and it was probably disappointing that they didn't use another couple of subs in the final quarter when they had nothing much to lose.

The January cobwebs were evident in the first quarter as both sides turned over ball. Tyrone fared the better, though, with two points from Ronan O'Neill.

Donegal gradually got back in the contest with points from Colm McFadden

and Michael Murphy. Murphy was involved in the two best incidents of the opening half, being denied in spectacular fashion by Niall Morgan from the penalty spot on 20 minutes, but three minutes from the break, the Donegal captain availed of hesitancy by Aidan McCrory to fire home a cracker of a goal to the corner of the net.

The penalty save by Morgan from a sweetly struck Murphy penalty was sheer class although Morgan was at fault in the lead up to the penalty, dropping a centre from Gary McFadden and then fouling Darach O'Connor as the Donegal debutant got to the ball first. O'Connor is a son of the famous John 'Jigger' O'Connor of Roscommon fame in the 1970s and 80s.

Tyrone kept in touch with Tiernan McCann and Patrick

McNiece but further Donegal points from McFadden and one from full-back Eamon McGee saw Donegal lead at the break, 1-5 to 0-5

Tyrone were level by the 42nd minute with Patrick McNiece (2) and Ronan O'Neill finding the target. Michael Murphy replied but Tyrone 'keeper Niall Morgan found the range from a '45' before McNiece tied up the game.

Michael Murphy and McNiece also traded points to leave the sides still level in the 54th minute, but from there Tyrone took over with Morgan really impressive.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Frank McGlynn, Eamon McGee (0-1), Eamonn Doherty; Declan Walsh, Leo McLoone, Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh, Odhran McNi-

allais; Gary McFadden, Dermot Molloy, Marty O'Reilly; Darach O'Connor, Michael Murphy (1-4,1f), Colm McFadden (0-2,1f). Subs Thomas McKinley for O'Reilly 56; Antoine McFadden for Kavanagh 57 (black card)

Tyrone: Niall Morgan (0-3,3f,45); Aidan McCrory, Conor Clarke, Barry Tierney; Ciaran McGinley, Danny McBride, Tiernan McCann (0-1); Plunkett Kane, Conor Grugan; Niall McKenna, Shea McGuigan (0-1), Emmett McKenna; Patrick McNiece (0-4,2f), Matthew Donnelly, Ronan O'Neill (0-3,1f). Subs., Peter Hughes (0-1) for Kane; Kevin Gallagher for E McKenna, both ht; Ronan McNamee for McBride 50

Referee: Barry Cassidy (Derry)

DR MCKENNA CUP, SECTION A, ROUND TWO

Donegal come good in the closing ten minutes as they come from four down to win by two points and keep their Dr McKenna Cup hopes alive

DONEGAL BACK TO WINNING WAYS

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Donegal are back winning matches again following yesterday's two point victory over Armagh, in the Dr McKenna Cup.

Donegal 1-10
Armagh 0-11

A Colm McFadden scrambled goal nine minutes from the end of normal time turned this tie on its head and saw the men from the North West come from behind for their first competitive win of 2014.

The goal was a reward for persistence and determination as McFadden (twice) had been denied at point blank by Philip McEvoy and Darach O'Connor (once) by Kieran Toner, with last ditch saves before McFadden, following

up, blasted to the Armagh net to bring his side back into a contest that seemed to be slipping away.

After the goal Donegal, who had been out of sorts for most of the second period, were a transformed side. And Michael Murphy tied up the game five minutes later after good work from Odhran MacNiallais, who had a good game throughout.

And they were in front shortly afterwards for the first time since the 25 minute when Murphy pointed brilliantly from between the 13 and 20 metre lines way out on the left hand wing and close to the side. A trademark Murphy strike! With Donegal tails up, MacNiallais rounded off a good day with two late points to stretch the Donegal lead out to three points before Robbie Tasker kicked Armagh's only point of the closing 20 minutes.

LIVELY START

Donegal had started the game at a lively pace and hit the game's opening two scores courtesy of points from Darach O'Connor and Colm McFadden. New kid on the block O'Connor grafted hard before taking a lay back from Michael Murphy to pop over on the minute mark. McFadden converted from 30 metres for number two four minutes later.

While Armagh were winning loads of possession and despite playing with the aid of a very strong wind that blew directly down the Athletic Grounds, they struggled against a resolute Donegal defence.

Wing forward Stefan Campbell, after a number of wayward strikes finally, broke the deadlock for the locals on 13 minutes. And one minute later Ethan Rafferty landed a spectacular

from outside the 45 to tie up the game. Donegal were really struggling under their own kickouts and were labouring around midfield.

Yet despite this Donegal continued to forage well in defence and with MacNiallais, McFadden and O'Connor troubling the Orchard rear-guard they were soon back in front again. Murphy, on 23 minutes, drove between the posts from 40 metres to edge Donegal 0-3 to 0-2 in front once more. And that was how it remained until the locals put on a late spurt in the closing nine minutes of the half. In that period - Ethan Rafferty, Mark Shields, Oisín MacLomhair, Stefan Forker and Robbie Tasker - all found the target to send the Orchard County, in 0-7 to 0-3 at half-time.

Michael Murphy and David Walsh - a half-time replacement - scored early points on

the resumption for Donegal to reduce the margin to two, 0-7 to 0-5.

But Armagh, as they did in the first period, slowly took control again and with Rafferty and James Lavery ruling the air around midfield the locals pulled away again and by the end of the third quarter had sailed five clear, 0-10 to 0-5 courtesy of strikes from Campbell and substitute McVerry.

But McFadden's goal turned the tie around and not even the introduction of Jamie Clarke late on could halt the Donegal men.

Donegal: Michael Boyle, Declan Walsh, Eamon McGee, Eamon Doherty; Frank McGlynn, Leo McLoone, Karl Lacey; Matthew Smyth, Rory Kavanagh; Odhran MacNiallais (0-2), Dermot Molloy, Thomas McKinley; Colm McFadden (1-1, 1f), Michael Murphy (0-4, 3f), Darach

O'Connor (0-1). Subs: Neil McGee for E Doherty; Leon Thompson for D Molloy; David Walsh (0-1) for T McKinley (all at h/t); Neil Gallagher for M Smyth (46); Gary McFadden (0-1) for R Kavanagh (54); Stephen McLaughlin for D O'Connor (63 inj).

Armagh: Philip McEvoy; Andy Mallon, Charlie Vernon, Finian Moriarty; Mark Shields (0-1), Kieran Toner, Ciaran Rafferty; Ethan Rafferty (0-2, 1, 45), James Lavery; Oisín MacLomhair (0-1), Kevin O'Rourke, Stefan Campbell (0-2); Robbie Tasker (0-3), Stefan Forker (0-1, 1f), Niall McConville. Subs: Eugene McVerry (0-1) for K O'Rourke (27); Michael McKenna for Oisín MacLomhair (44); Paul Hughes for F Moriarty (57, inj); Jamie Clarke for S Forker (59); Ciaran McCooey for K Toner (65 inj).

Referee: Eamon McHugh (Tyrone)

GAA - POWER NI DR MCKENNA CUP SECTION A

Donegal win well, but miss out on semi-finals

DONEGAL 3-17
 QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY 3-05

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT SEAN
 MACCUMHAILL PARK

MICHAEL Murphy and Colm McFadden hit a combined 2-10 as Donegal sauntered to a twelve-point win over Queen's University Belfast on Wednesday night in Ballybofey.

The big win wasn't enough to secure a passage into the semi-finals with Monaghan hammering Fermagh on the same night to edge the best runners-up spot, although this was another good evening at the office for Jim McGuinness and company.

Ryan Rafferty's hat-trick of goals helped deny Donegal an even greater margin of victory - but McGuinness will still have been pleased with a comfortable win for his Tir Chonaill side.

Rafferty hit a pair of first-half goals and added another early in the second half to bring some semblance of respectability to the scoreboard for the students - who only score their first point in the 44th minute.

Murphy cracked home a superb goal straight after Rafferty's second at the tail end of the first half to help Donegal lead by a strange 1-7 to 2-0 scoreline at the interval.

While Rafferty found the net for a third time nine minutes into the second half, McFadden fired home a 53rd minute goal to pave the way for

a comfortable conclusion that included another Donegal major, netted by Rory Kavanagh.

It was another useful night for Donegal, who welcomed Christy Toye into competitive action again, the St Michael's man contributing well following his introduction at half-time, scoring a point midway through part two.

It was his first appearance for Donegal since the 2012 All-Ireland final and his was a welcomed return on a night when Neil Gallagher was superb in his first start of the year, with Murphy and McFadden having the needles sharpened well.

Neil McGee also made a first start of 2014, with Karl Lacey and Paul Durcan returning to the side, while Leon Thompson was back for his first start since being recalled to the panel.

Donegal rolled off four points in the opening quarter of an hour, with two frees by Murphy adding to the first point by McFadden with Neil Gallagher getting in on the act with an excellent curling effort from around 40 metres out.

Queen's - managed by Ballyshannon man Anthony McGrath - were right back in it when Ryan Rafferty rounded Paul Durcan for a goal following a move engineered by Donegal panelist Martin McElhinney in the 18th minute.

McFadden (free), Murphy (free) and Darach O'Connor slotted over for the hosts, but they were stunned

when Queen's bagged a second goal in the final minute of the first period.

Again it was Rafferty who fired home, tucking past Durcan and punishing a moment of hesitancy in the Tir Chonaill rearguard.

But Donegal's response was emphatic, Murphy brilliantly drilling to the net from 20 metres out, his blistering effort giving Michael Cunningham no chance of making a stop.

Donegal might well have been further in front at the short whistle, but Odhrán MacNiallais' ball across goal just eluding the advanced Frank McGlynn, who seemed perfectly-poised to palm to the net.

Murphy extended the lead with a neat score just 20 seconds into the new half, but goal-hungry Queens struck another major as Rafferty completed his hat-trick by palming home from a pass by Ryan Murray.

But for the goals, Queens would've drawn a blank until the 44th minute, when wing-back Ryan Mallon popped over their first point.

Donegal added a second goal when McFadden drilled home from Toye's assist, just moments after being denied by Cunningham from point-blank range.

Queen's weren't helped by three black cards in the second half, with Gerard Collins, Ryan Murray and Jack Dowling all having to leave the action.

Donegal smelled blood and they turned the screw in search of the

goals that would've secured a semi-final spot.

Toye slotted over to raise a huge cheer from the home fans as he landed a point on his return, while Malin's Stephen McLaughlin added his name to an ever-growing roster with his first senior point for Donegal.

Murphy and McFadden continued to roll over points and, three minutes from the end, Kavanagh finished off from close range after Murphy and McFadden combined to tee up the

Match Stats

DONEGAL/QUB

Goals 3/3
 Points 17/5
 Wides 6/7
 45s 0/0
 Frees awarded 18/13
 Frees scored 7/0
 Short efforts 2/3
 Black cards 0/3
 Yellow cards 0/1
 Red cards 0/0

chance. Kavanagh also clipped over a point and replacement midfielder Matthew Smyth completed the rout in added-on time.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Eamonn Doherty; Frank McGlynn, Leo McLoone (0-1), Karl Lacey; Neil Gallagher (0-1), Gary McFadden; Antoin McFadden, Leon Thompson, Odhrán MacNiallais; Colm McFadden (1-4, 2f), Michael Murphy (1-6, 5f), Darach O'Connor (0-1). Subs: Christy Toye (0-1) for Thompson (half-time), Rory Kavanagh (1-1) for G.McFadden (half-time), David Walsh for Lacey (half-time), Stephen McLaughlin (0-1) for O'Connor (46 mins), Matthew Smyth (0-1) for Gallagher (67 mins), Thoma McKinley for A.McFadden (67 mins)

Queen's University: Mick Cunningham; Conal McNulty, Che Cullen; Darren O'Hanlon; Ryan Mallon (0-2) Gerard Collins, Paddy Burns; Aaron Finden, Harry Og Conlon (0-1); Cono Maginn (0-1), Aidan Brogan, Martin McElhinney; Ryan Murray (0-1), Rory Grugan, Ryan Rafferty (3-0). Subs: Killian Moynagh for McNulty (17 mins), Micheál McCann for Collins

(black card, 46 mins), Jack Dowling for McElhinney (49 mins), Turlough Gallagher for Findon (53 mins), Michael Monan for Murray (black card, 57 mins), Ross McGarry for Dowling (black card, 66 mins)

Referee: Brendan Rice (Down).

GAA - ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINAL

DERRY 0-11
 DONEGAL 1-11

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY
 AT CELTIC PARK

THE sounds of summer are in the air and Donegal are on the prowl again.

A devastating start to the second half saw Donegal overcome Derry and book their place in the Ulster semi-finals, with Jim McGuinness's side looking a good bet for a fourth Ulster final in a row.

They trailed 0-6 to 0-4 at half-time, but they exploded to score 1-5 during the opening 13 minutes of the second half.

It was here that they laid down their credentials to the province on a day when Donegal's tactical nous, experience and patience came good.

Leo McLoone's goal, netted in the 39th minute, was the game's big score as Donegal scored a win at a claustrophobic Celtic Park.

Thirty-five seconds into part two, Donegal outlined they meant business. Karl Lacey, magnificent throughout, made a superb interception to rob Niall Holly. When the ball was worked toward Anthony Thompson, the Glenties man converted and Donegal were within striking distance.

The decisive score arrived when Thompson's long ball found Murphy - now closer to goal than he had been for most of the first half - and he off-loaded to the rampaging Frank McGlynn. His lobbed pass over the head of Gerard O'Kane was magnificent, but McLoone still had work to do. McLoone's finish was clinical, a fine lofted left-footed shot that found the bottom corner of Thomas Mallon's net.

Murphy started as an extra man around the middle of the field - an area that didn't have the presence of the suspended Rory Kavanagh, the injured Neil Gallagher or the strategically-placed sub Martin McElhinney from the start - but the Donegal captain had the winning of the game during that period of Donegal dominance at the outset of the second half.

He sold a dummy, which Chrissy McKaigue bought for a fine score that opened up a three-point lead, but it was his point in the 42nd minute that

justified the admission price and then some. Murphy stood over a sideline ball just aside the flag of the 45-metre line and looked to take it short. McGuinness had a word in his ear, four steps later he was sending a booming effort off the outside of his right boot sailing between the posts.

A better score, you are unlikely to come across so long as this summer advances.

Tactically, Donegal were on the money in these moments. Rory Kavanagh watched on suspended and McGuinness opted to leave Neil Gallagher in reserve, while he sprang a surprise in not starting Martin McElhinney, who had played well in the engine room during the League. McElhinney came into the fray at half-time and Gallagher was put on just as Murphy's sideline kick raised the green and gold flags for a four-point lead.

From the off, Paddy McGrath was included for his first game for the county since last year's All-Ireland quarter-final defeat to Mayo and the diminutive Darach O'Connor - an 18-year-old pupil of Scoil Muire in Bun-crana - made his first Ulster SFC appearance.

By the 48th minute Donegal were six in front, as Murphy fired over a free and a blistering Tir Chonaill move saw McGlynn again provide the assist for Patrick McBrearty, only for his close-range effort to rise over the crossbar when a goal was on.

Derry were flummoxed and Donegal were in control, but the Oak Leaf refused to wither.

Mark Lynch fired over Derry's first score in 20 minutes from a free, with Benny Heron and Emmet Bradley (free) bringing them to within a goal as the clock entered the final ten minutes.

Lacey was back to his best here, curbing Lynch's ability to stamp authority in proceedings and also playing a lead role in those waves of at-

tacks that saw Donegal move into the driving seat. McGlynn, Thompson and McLoone contributed magnificently and there were those golden contributions by Murphy that swung the pendulum.

Derry stayed in touch, but Neil McGee made a fine block to deny Kevin Johnson and David Walsh, a substitute, nipped in to dispossess Gareth McKinless. Benny Heron ('45) and Lynch made for a nervous finish after McElhinney got on the end of a fine move to score, but McLoone landed the clinching score in stoppage time, with Derry's replacement James Kielt black carded late on, meaning Derry finished with 14 men as he had already been booked.

A frustrating ending for Derry, who had such a promising League campaign, but for Donegal it was a reminder that they haven't gone away.

To have left Gallagher and McElhinney in the dugout on a day when Kavanagh was suspended and for the plan to work was a message that

theirs is not the one-dimensional approach it is sometimes said to be.

In the opening half, they played the percentages and Derry didn't take advantage of the possession.

Lynch (free) and O'Connor swapped early points before Donegal should have had a goal in the tenth minute. McBrearty's effort for a point came off the left upright and it was the Kilcar man who had the second shot after possession was retrieved by the ever-alert Thomson. His ball across goal was perfect for McBrearty, but his shot was blasted wide from a glorious position.

Lynch restored Derry's lead, only for Christy Toye to get Donegal back on level terms after a very patient attack from the visitors. The Derry response was instant, Emmet Bradley slamming over to put Derry ahead once more.

Celtic Park was a chessboard, but neither side was committed to making a bold move.

Instead, play swung from packed end to packed end, with both teams piling the bodies behind the ball.

Lacey swept over, but again Derry hit the front as Niall Holly curled a massive score over from 40 metres out on the left-hand side of the field. At the time it was the score of the game, but Murphy would soon have something to say about that. Holly was only on as a sub a matter of minutes, with Derry suffering a massive blow when Fergal Doherty left the park injured in the 16th minute. Doherty had won a couple of superb catches in the middle of the park. Although Holly dug in well, his influence was not what Doherty might have offered.

Derry led by two when Bradley converted a 45-metre free and it went out to three when Ciarán McFaul got in on the act.

By now there were worried faces in the Donegal camp, but Derry squandered chances to insert the knife even further. Bradley lost a free when he took too long and referee Joe McQuillan opted to throw it up in the 29th minute. In added time at the end of the first half, Derry passed up on a two-v-one attack when Holly completely lost his bearings racing onto a loose ball when only Neil McGee was back to defend against he and Emmett McGuckin.

Murphy, from a free, made sure Donegal were within striking distance at the break. When they're in that position, Donegal always look likely - and it was in the third quarter where they came to life and did the damage. On the occasion of his 150th Donegal appearance - and what was a record 51st in the Championship - there was the rare sight of Colm McFadden being held scoreless but even that wasn't enough to get Derry over the line as Donegal absorbed the blows to advance and the rest of Ulster began to look in their direction again.

DERRY: Thomas Mallon; Gareth McKinless, Chrissy McKaigue, Dermot McBride; Kevin Johnson, Gerard O'Kane, Sean Leo McGoldrick; Fergal Doherty, Patsy Bradley; Ciarán McFaul (0-1), Mark Lynch (0-4, 3f), Emmet Bradley (0-3, 2f); Enda Lynn, Emmett McGuckin, Cailean O'Boyle.

Subs: Niall Holly (0-1) for Doherty (16 mins), Ryan Bell for O'Boyle (43 mins), Benny Heron (0-2, 1'45) for Holly (48 mins), Oisín Duffy for Johnson (58 mins), James Kielt for McGuckin (61 mins).

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Paddy McGrath; Frank McGlynn, Karl Lacey (0-1), Anthony Thompson (0-1); Christy Toye (0-1), Odhrán MacNiallais; Darach O'Connor (0-1), Leo McLoone (1-1), Ryan McHugh; Colm McFadden, Michael Murphy (0-4, 3f), Patrick McBrearty (0-1).

Subs: Martin McElhinney (0-1) for Toye (half-time), Neil Gallagher for O'Connor (43 mins), David Walsh for MacNiallais (57 mins), Luke Keaney for McBrearty (65 mins), Dermot Molloy for McFadden (68 mins).

Black carded: Derry: James Kielt (71 mins)

Booked: Derry: James Kielt (67 mins), Donegal: Neil McGee (64 mins).

Sent off: Derry: James Kielt (71 mins)

REFEREE: Joe McQuillan (Cavan).

MATCH STATS

DERRY v DONEGAL		
0	Goals	1
11	Points	11
7	Wides	7
1	45s	0
20	Frees awarded	19
5	Frees scored	3
2	Short efforts	3
1	Black cards	0
1	Yellow cards	1
1	Red cards	0
ATTENDANCE 15,883		

Ulster SFC Semi-final

Antrim's challenge fizzles out as Donegal find another gear

Jim McGuinness's side hit 3-9 in the second half to storm to a convincing win

Darach O'Connor and Odhran Mac Niallais impress as they grasp their opportunity



Keith Duggan
at St Tiernach's Park, Clones

Donegal	3-16
Antrim	0-12

Donegal came roaring into their fourth Ulster final in role yesterday, with a possible show-down against last year's champions Monaghan looming in a month's time.

Well, not exactly roaring because this was a strikingly subdued championship afternoon in the market town and while

Donegal's rampant second-half scoring burst kept the crowd entertained, the day failed to reach the heights that makes the Ulster competition special.

There were, as they say, extenuating circumstances.

A very small Saffron support showed up and the Donegal fans in the crowd of 11,795 have become accustomed to dining on fatter calves. A clever first half by Antrim, with deep defensive cover allied to nimble point-taking, left the sides tied at 0-7 apiece at the break.

Their advantage

It was a perfectly plotted first half for Baker Bradley's side. Mark Sweeney landed two terrific points, Kevin O'Boyle came marauding forward at will and Niall McKeever claimed three huge balls which Antrim turned to their advantage.

The Donegal men shot under

pressure, fired eight wides and when they trotted off at the break, their fans seemed slightly restless and uneasy.

But on a day when their marquee full-forward line endured varying frustrations, their new generation led the way in what became an overwhelmingly one-sided second half.

Eighteen-year-old Darach O'Connor capped a buzzing afternoon with a goal of true audacity in the 48th minute, tearing a hole through Antrim's middle with a break, taking a return pass from Frank McGlynn and firing low to the net when everyone expected a point.

Odhran MacNiallais put in a big shift at midfield and hit four points from play. Neither man was scheduled to start. Dermot Brick Molloy was sent in with 15 minutes to go and hit 1-1, meaning that Donegal had 2-7 from its named bench here.

That handsome return bodes well for a side regularly accused of having zero bench options. For the second championship Sunday running, Jim McGuinness was forced to make late alterations to his team, with Karl Lacey and Rory Kavanagh carrying slight injuries.

Worse, Neil Gallagher broke a wealth of possession for Donegal at midfield but then retired

injured after 18 minutes. It was a day for improvisation and Paul Durcan's wicked variety of disguised kick-outs helped Donegal keep a flow of possession.

On a day when Michael Murphy was shadowed by Sean McVeigh and double-teamed every time he touched the ball, Donegal struggled to plot paths through Antrim early on.

4

Donegal have qualified for a fourth successive Ulster final as a result of yesterday's win

Antrim had to make late changes to their defence, with Ricky and Marty Johnson withdrawing from the side after their father Richard died on Friday evening.

The Antrim panel stood arm in arm for the minute's silence and their deeply impressive and honest first half was a tribute to the absent brothers. Their full back line did well and Murphy was forced to roam for possession.

Patrick McBrearty again left the field after a scoreless afternoon. The Kilcar man looks like a player trying too hard rather than trusting his instinct. Colm

McFadden, however, showed signs that he is gradually working towards the scintillating form of two summers ago.

The Donegal defence was businesslike except for a few needless frees and once again, Christy Toye had a huge influence in dictating the direction of the Donegal attack. Leo McLoone coolly slipped the goal which broke the match open and once Donegal relaxed into backs-and-forwards play, they piled on the scores.

Laywaste

Donegal's ability to lay waste to opposition plans with intense bursts of precise, aggressive attacks makes them a difficult side to read. At times yesterday, they were highly cautious with the ball, running loops around the edges of Antrim's defence.

They smothered McKeever at midfield and won ball after ball and once they attacked at speed, they were a menace. A run of 2-4 in 18 minutes, during

DONEGAL: 1 P Durcan, 2 E McGee, 3 N McGee, 4 P McGrath, 12 R McHugh, 5 F McGlynn, 7 A Thompson, 8 N Gallagher, 20 O MacNiallais (0-4), 10 C Toye (0-1), 11 L McLoone (1-2), 23 D O'Connor (1-2), 13 P McBrearty, 14 M Murphy (0-4, 2 frees, 150), C McFadden (0-2, 1 free), Subs: M McElhinney for N Gallagher (17 mins), D Walsh for P McBrearty (51), D Molloy (1-1) for D O'Connor (56), L Keeney for C Toye (61 mins), D Walsh for N McGee (67 mins), M O'Reilly for L McLoone (70 mins).
ANTRIM: 1 P Flood, 6 J Crozier, 21 S McVeigh, 4 N Delargy, 7 J Lavery, 2 K O'Boyle, 11 M Sweeney (0-2), 8 M McCann, 9 N McKeever, 10 C Murray (0-1), 19 P McBride, 12 P McCann (0-1), 13 B Neeson (0-3 frees), 14 K Niblock (0-1), 15 T McCann (0-3, 2 frees), Subs: R Murray for P McCann (48 mins), T Scullion for McBride (51 mins), P Cunningham (0-1 free) for B Neeson (55 mins).
Referee: B Cassidy (Derry).

Donegal	First Half	Second half	Total	Antrim	First Half	Second half	Total
Goals	0	3	3	Goals	0	0	0
Points	7	9	16	Points	7	5	12
Wides	8	6	14	Wides	2	4	6
Frees	9	8	17	Frees	10	8	18
45s	1	1	2	45s	0	0	0
Yellow cards ..	0	1	1	Yellow cards ..	0	3	3
Black cards	0	0	0	Black cards	0	0	0
Red cards	0	0	0	Red cards	0	0	0

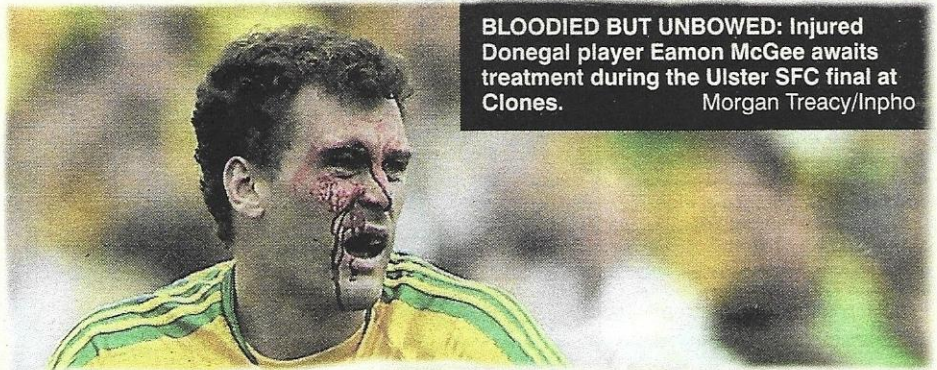
GAA - ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

The Donegal team who defeated Antrim to reach their fourth Ulster final in a row.



Best on show

Ryan McHugh played as an orthodox wing forward and was superb. He nullified the threat of Dessie Mone and had a huge influence on the game, kicking a point and having a hand in a few more.



BLOODIED BUT UNBOWED: Injured Donegal player Eamon McGee awaits treatment during the Ulster SFC final at Clones. Morgan Treacy/Inpho

Ominous signs as Donegal make it three from four



Ulster SFC final
MONAGHAN..... 1-9
DONEGAL..... 0-15

Orla Bannon
 Clones



In the end, it was way easier than expected for Donegal, but the manner of their victory was of no surprise to a supremely confident Jim McGuinness.

The Donegal boss basked in the achievement of winning a third Ulster title in four years, a feat he immediately ranked ahead of their All-Ireland success in 2012, and then revealed he knew at 10am yesterday his team were going to turn the tables on Monaghan.

Twelve months ago, Monaghan took the game by the scruff of the neck, scoring the first four points in the opening eight or nine minutes, but yesterday it was Donegal who set the tone early on.

Having clearly targeted a good start, McGuinness's side scored the first three points of an attritional, bruising final, played in front of 31,912 in St Tiernach's Park.

Once they got their noses in front, they never looked in any danger of being pegged back. So robust was their defending, with banks of green and gold jerseys in place every time Monaghan players looked up with the ball, it was a three-point lead that felt like about ten.

Even when Christopher McGuinness scored a 49th minute goal for Monaghan to bring them to within a point, 0-10 to 1-6 Donegal's response

was emphatic, scoring the next three points to kill off any brief hopes of a comeback.

Monaghan, defending a 16-game unbeaten run in Clones stretching back to 2011, came into the game as marginal favourites, having beaten Donegal in last year's provincial decider and in the Allianz league division two final three months ago.

It was a tag they probably didn't want and struggled to live up to with so many of their key men below-par. The long ball in to Kieran Hughes in the first-half didn't work and Conor McManus, well shackled by Neil McGee, was living off scraps.

The fact that the Monaghan captain did not score until injury-time, by which stage the county's supporters were streaming out of the ground, underlines how much this was not Monaghan's day.

Donegal led from start to finish and the margin of victory certainly didn't flatter them. All over the field they had success stories, with the McGee brothers taking care of McManus and Kieran Hughes while old warrior Neil Gallagher, despite wasting possession at times, had a huge game in the middle of the field.

So too did Odhran MacNiallais, at the other end of the age spectrum, who kicked three fine points, including two in the first-half off his supposedly weaker right foot. Ryan McHugh was dynamic and carried a lot of ball and Paddy McBrearty's impact from the bench was devastating, with three points from play in the second half.

Donegal led 0-6 to 0-4 at half-time, Monaghan feeling aggrieved that a foot block by Karl Lacey on Fintan Kelly

did not result in a penalty after 31 minutes.

Lacey was one of three late additions to the team, with Neil Gallagher and Darach O'Connor also starting, with McBrearty, Rory Kavanagh and Martin McElhinney the three to drop out.

Lacey made an immediate impact with the first score after five minutes in a rugged opening period when scores were at a premium. Donegal scored the first three points inside the opening 13 minutes before Paul Finlay opened Monaghan's account in the 13th minute with a left-footed point from long range and closed the gap to a point with a free nine minutes later.

Monaghan struggled to get a foothold in the game and frequently turned over possession. Donegal were much more clinical when on the ball and MacNiallais scored two stylish points from the wing. Colm McFadden's free stretched Donegal's lead to 0-5 to 0-2 after 26 minutes.

When Kelly's shot at goal went out for a '45', Monaghan goalkeeper Rory Beggan nailed it, having missed two dead ball strikes earlier in the game.

Monaghan picked up four yellow cards in a bad-tempered first half, Dick Clerkin receiving his just before half-time for an off-the-ball challenge on Michael Murphy.

Finlay's free in first-half stoppage time reduced Donegal's lead to 0-6 to 0-4 at the break. Donegal were rarely troubled in the second-half, even when McGuinness drilled a low shot across Paul Durcan and into the net for the only goal of the game after 49 minutes.

They scored four of the first five points after the second half through McFadden (two frees), MacNiallais and McBrearty.

Drew Wylie battled manfully against McFadden and had the better of his one-to-one duel but Donegal were on top in most positions.

Michael Murphy did not score until late on but his second free after 68 minutes was a monster effort from almost 60 metres, a fitting score before going up to lift the Anglo Celt Cup for a third time in four years.

Scorers for Donegal: C McFadden 0-4 (4f), O MacNiallais 0-3, P McBrearty 0-3, M Murphy 0-2 (2f), A Thompson, K Lacey, R McHugh 0-1

Scorers for Monaghan: P Finlay 0-4 (3f), C McGuinness 1-0, R Beggan 0-2 (1 '45'), V Corey, K Hughes, C McManus 0-1 each

Subs for Donegal: P McBrearty for O'Connor (25), R Kavanagh for Toyne (46), M McElhinney for MacNiallais (58), David Walsh for McLoone (59), D Molloy for McFadden (66)

Subs for Monaghan: C McGuinness for McKenna (43), O Duffy for Golligly (51), P Donaghy for Malone (59), K O'Connell for Kelly (59), G Doogan for Clerkin (67)

Referee: Maurice Deegan (Laois).

GAMEZone

Donegal v Monaghan

1 P Durcan		
3 N McGee	2 E McGee	6 F McGlynn
15 C McManus	14 K Hughes	13 D Malone
5 A Thompson	22 K Lacey	7 P McGrath
12 P Finlay	11 S Golligly	10 P McKenna
26 N Gallagher	12 O MacNiallais	
8 D Clerkin	9 D Hughes	
4 R McHugh	11 L McLoone	9 C Toyne
5 D Mone	4 C Walshe	7 F Kelly
13 D O'Connor	14 M Murphy	15 C McFadden
17 R Wylie	6 V Corey	3 D Wylie
1 R Beggan		

■ = Donegal ■ = Monaghan

McGuinness thrilled as Donegal dig deep to conquer province for third time in four years

THE IRISH TIMES
Monday, July 21, 2014

Donegal coach hails hard-earned triumph over Monaghan as 'our best victory'



Keith Duggan
in Clones

OLD Ulster is dead. In other decades, Donegal came and went like mayflies in the northern theatre but yesterday they won the Anglo-Celt Cup for the third time in four years. In doing so, they avenged last year's brilliant coup by Monaghan.

It was a clammy full-house here of 31,912 – and the stewards declared that they could have sold another 8,000 tickets – with not a breath of wind in the old park.

Blood and dust was the order of the day; the superb point-taking of Patrick McBrearty and the sweet, streetwise running game of the latest McHugh to star for Donegal were among the more refined pleasures.

Donegal led from the first bell until the last and Monaghan got inside their shirts but not their minds here.

It finished 0-15 to 1-9, war-time rationing in comparison to the sumptuous scoreline which drifted towards mid-Ulster from Croke Park.

But none of that mattered. This was local in every sense. The Donegal men celebrated almost as fiercely as they played:

it was clear that this afternoon was about deeper than the prize on offer.

Maybe it was the rush in the aftermath but when Jim McGuinness was asked about the importance of the game in the bedlam of the tunnel afterwards, he said he felt that this triumph exceeded even the All-Ireland win of 2012.

"I think it's our best victory in terms of the questions that were being asked of us and what was being said about us, and had the boys got the stomach for it. I think they proved today. I think it's our best victory because of the circumstances and because what surrounded it.

Sacred triumph

"We went into the All-Ireland final after winging Ulster, beating Kerry and beating Cork and we won our All-Ireland.

"Here, we were absolutely wrote off a week out from the Derry match and we're Ulster champions today. We were demoralised in Croke Park in the quarter-final last year. So to go from that point to put in a performance..."

His words trailed off. If placing a third Ulster title in four seasons over the sacred triumph of an All-Ireland title seems contrary, it has to be placed in context. When Donegal were emphatically relieved of their Ulster and All-Ireland titles last summer, they were dismissed as yesterday's news. A change in the backroom team last October was inter-

preted as evidence of an unhappy camp.

The spring departure of Mark McHugh, the brightest star during Donegal's emergent news, was offered as final evidence that the usual discontent had returned to the Northwest. But yesterday evening, Ryan McHugh rapped his palms off the low roof in delight as he made his back to the victorious dressing room after 70 razor-sharp minutes. He has an Ulster medal now to match his father Martin's and the two his absent brother has. No Donegal team had beaten a Monaghan championship outfit since McHugh seniors' bunch did so in the blazing summer of 1983. This was the first time Monaghan lost a match in Clones in 16 games.

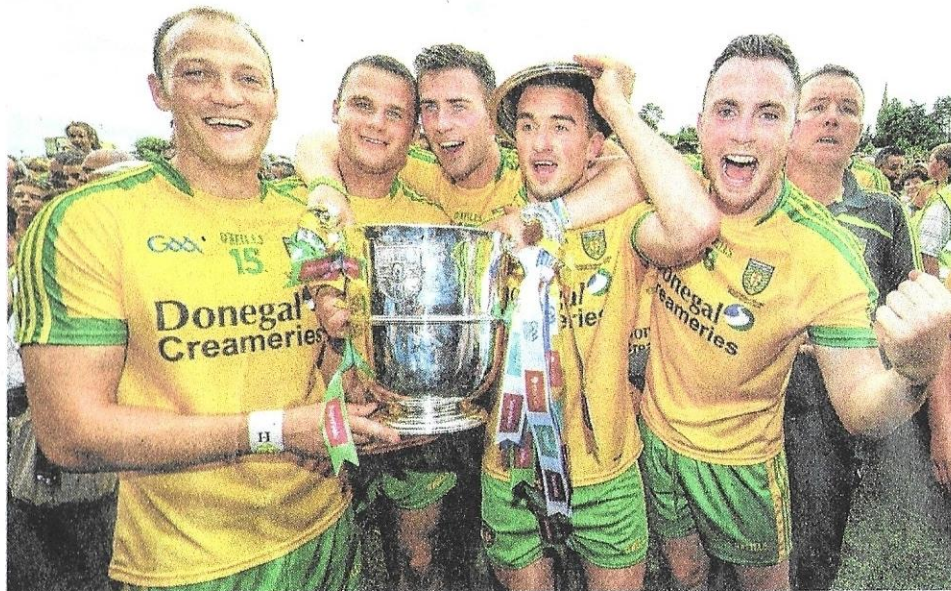
The park on the hill has been a charm for them but Donegal left no room for voodoo here: they were organised, ravenous and composed from beginning to end. Even after Chris McGuinness rattled their nerves with a brilliant goal from nothing in the 50th minute, Donegal tapped into the

“Here, we were absolutely wrote off a week out from the Derry match”

memory bank. They stuck with the plan. They fired off three in a row. The rebellion paled.

"That's right, the goal got us right back in the game and we wanted to push on at that stage and take the opportunity," said a downcast Malachy O'Rourke.

Instead, they got tangled up in web. Chief among Mona-



Ulster SFC Final

PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL PRITCHARD/PRESSEYE/INPHO

ghan's persecutors during that period was Patrick McBrearty. The Kilcar pure shooter didn't start but responded to the disappointment by landing three heartbreakers from down field.

"Nah; whatever Jim decides you have to deal with it," he shrugged happily about receiving news of his demotion.

"This is his fourth year and he has not been wrong yet. Jim came up to me this morning and he said to me: you will get on and I said 'Whatever you think, Jim'. and I was glad to be able to come on and help the team get the victory."

Monaghan were up for this but couldn't summon up the magical fusion of opportunism, courage and divine point-taking with which they

claimed the championship last year.

They simply couldn't score enough and despite storming games from Vinny Corey, Drew Wylie and Paul Finlay, their day had the feel of a prize-fighter determined to see out the rounds. And blows, accidental or otherwise, were traded, with Eamonn McGee departing in a spectacular fountain of blood only to return for the tense last closing seconds.

Long arms

Afterwards, McGuinness wrapped his long arms around his back room men, all three of them team-mates from the era when Donegal habitually lost these showpieces.

"Delighted for Paul McGonagle, Damien Diver and John

Duffy. They've waited a long time for this. They've won their Ulster championship now. I'm not sure how many they've lost between them – it must be close to 15 but they've got their hands on it now. It's fantastic."

If the respective provincial champions win their quarter-finals, then All-Ireland champions Dublin will meet Donegal in an All-Ireland semi-final.

The very idea smacks of a Cold War summit. Dublin's style of torrential scoring and champagne afternoons versus Donegal's faith in austere honesty and lightning raids. This era of football probably needs a meeting between the counties.

But that's for other days. As the evening lights came on in Clones, it was back to the future for Donegal.



DONEGAL v MONAGHAN

ULSTER FINAL, SUNDAY 20 JULY, CLONES



4: Karl Lacey slots over with his left foot after Rory Beggan under pressure from Colm McFadden fails to claim a high ball and Lacey is the quickest to pick up the loose ball and fire over.
Donegal 0-1 Monaghan 0-0

10: Odhran MacNiallais slots over from the left taking a pass from Eamon McGee at the end of a good passing Donegal move. Donegal 0-2 Monaghan 0-0

12: A strong run from Neil McGee earns a free for Donegal that Colm McFadden slots over. Donegal 0-3 Monaghan 0-0

13: Huge point from distance from Paul Finlay gets Monaghan on the score sheet. Donegal 0-3 Monaghan 0-1

21: Michael Murphy as furious to concede a free and his protests see the ball moved forward and Paul Finlay taps over. Donegal 0-3 Monaghan 0-2

23: Great point from Anthony Thompson after Neil Gallagher had taken a magnificent catch from Durcan's kick out to send him on his way.
Donegal 0-4 Monaghan 0-2

26: Colm McFadden taps over a free and Donegal extend their lead.
Donegal 0-5 Monaghan 0-2

31: The game heats up and after a Monaghan goal chance and a call for a penalty for a foot block, Rory Beggan hits a 45 over and Monaghan are just two behind.
Donegal 0-5 Monaghan 0-3

35+1: Odhran MacNiallais with a fine point after a great take from Leo McLoone from a high ball from Paddy McBrearty. Donegal 0-6 Monaghan 0-3

35+3: Paul Finlay taps over from close range and again it's a two point game.
Donegal 0-6 Monaghan 0-4

HALF TIME

DONEGAL 0-6 MONAGHAN 0-4

36: Colm McFadden's free after Murphy is fouled gets Donegal under way in the second half. Donegal 0-7 Monaghan 0-4

37: Paul Finlay taps over a close range free for Monaghan.
Donegal 0-7 Monaghan 0-5

38: Good passing move from Donegal sees McBrearty feed MacNiallais who scores from long range.
Donegal 0-8 Monaghan 0-5

40: Brilliant score from Paddy McBrearty at the end of a good move found by Ryan McHugh after another turnover and swift break. Donegal 0-9 Monaghan 0-5

44: Strong run from Leo McLoone wins a free in front of goal that Colm McFadden taps over. Donegal 0-10 Monaghan 0-5

46: Beggan's free from distance brings Donegal's lead back to four.
Donegal 0-10 Monaghan 0-6

49: Goal for Monaghan after a mistake in the Donegal defence lets Chris McGuinness in and he buries the ball in the bottom corner to leave just a point between the teams.
Donegal 0-10 Monaghan 1-6

PADDY MCBREARTY: McBrearty made a huge contribution off the bench for Donegal and had his best game since Tyrone last year. He landed three super points and his link-up play with Kilcar clubmate Ryan McHugh was impressive. 8.5

53: Ryan McHugh blazes over with a goal chance for Donegal after a brilliant move saw Thompson in on goal following a great run by Neil McGee.
Donegal 0-11 Monaghan 1-6

55: Brilliant point from Paddy McBrearty after Colm McFadden did well to keep the ball alive and feed him the ball.
Donegal 0-12 Monaghan 1-6

57: Colm McFadden hauled back by Moan and from the free Murphy puts four between the teams.
Donegal 0-13 Monaghan 1-6

59: Great run from Ciaran Hughes and he fires over from distance to leave just three between the teams again.
Donegal 0-13 Monaghan 1-7

63: Brilliant run by the super Ryan McHugh sets up Paddy McBrearty for a fantastic score and once again there is four points between the teams.
Donegal 0-14 Monaghan 1-7

64: Vinney Corey responds immediately for Monaghan. Donegal 0-14 Monaghan 1-8

68: Massive point from Michael Murphy puts Donegal ahead by four again. Donegal 0-15 Monaghan 1-8

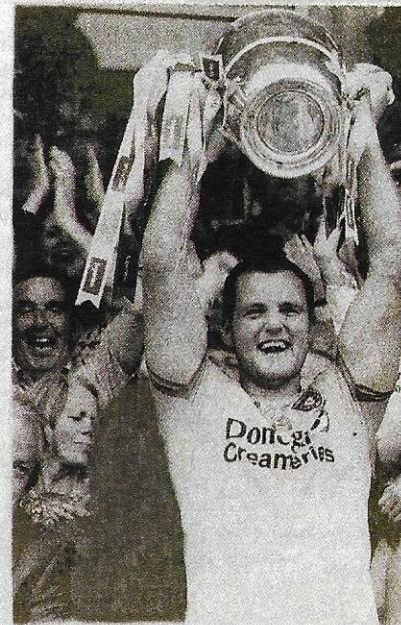
71: Long range from Conor McManus leaves just a kick of the ball between the teams as the game ticks well into injury time. Donegal 0-15 Monaghan 1-9

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v MONAGHAN

0	Goals	2
15	Points	7
7	Wides	3
0	45s	0
20	Frees awarded	22
6	Frees scored	2
3	Short efforts	3
0	Black cards	0
1	Yellow cards	4
0	Red cards	0

ATTENDANCE 31,912



DONEGAL ARE ULSTER CHAMPIONS

THE GAME AT A GLANCE

WITH CHRIS MCNULTY IN CLONES

MAN OF THE MATCH

Ryan McHugh (Donegal): In a game where Donegal had a few contenders it was McHugh who got the nod after a classy display. His intelligence in possession and usage of the ball is excellent. Scored a crucial point just after the Monaghan goal to kickstart Donegal again. The Kilcar man has had a brilliant campaign and he seems to be getting better with each passing game.

THE WHISTLER

Frees were hard bought off Maurice Deegan at times. The Laois whistler himself perhaps wasn't entirely to blame but there was an awful lot that went unpunished and some of the punishments that were handed down were lenient to say the least.

TURNING POINT

When Chris McGuinness fired past Paul Durcan for a Monaghan goal in the 50th minute, there were those who might've feared the worst. But Donegal's response was brilliant as McHugh, McBrearty and Murphy fired over three-in-a-row and one hand was on the ears of the Cup.

McBrearty's late intervention digs Donegal out of tight spot

DONEGAL 1-12
ARMAGH 1-11
DAMIAN LAWLOR
 at Croke Park

IT WAS an ugly, boring slugfest at the start but it turned out to be a decent game and although Donegal were nowhere near full throttle — and they won't get away with that again — they did just enough to get by Armagh and reach the All-Ireland semi-final. And so an exciting finale to a game that failed to inspire for long stages.

There was no doubting that it was raw, intense and in a strange way compelling throughout but the first 20 minutes was like watching a wrestling match.

Armagh had two late chances to draw the game from placed balls but on a rainy night in Dublin they were just too far out of the excellent Tony Kernan's zone and no blame can be apportioned his way — he had a very good night otherwise.

There is no doubt now that Armagh have the makings of a fine young team. Players like Stefan Campbell and the two Kernans worked relentlessly

last night, but they came up just a little short — kicking 10 wides didn't help them and they just lost their way in the middle third of the second half when they drifted a little.

Donegal kept their nerve but they have plenty to work on. They are in the last four but they looked leaden-footed at stages and their shooting was poor (15 wides). Much is made of the 16 or 17 players that Jim McGuinness likes to depend upon, but they brought on four subs last night and that helped them retain the sufficient tempo to cross the finish line.

Interestingly, Michael Murphy and Paddy McBrearty secured the crucial late scores to see them through — they were left up front for stages of this game but for much of it Murphy played right corner-back. Had he been left in the full-forward line for the entire 70 minutes maybe the game wouldn't have gone down to the wire. Coming

into this game Armagh were clearly dependent on Tony Kernan and Jamie Clarke, who had scored 0-21 and 0-19 respectively in the 2014 championship.

Stefan Campbell, too, was in decent form with eight points from play and those three came in for extra attention from the Donegal defence. For long stages, though, Kernan was the best player in the park.

The opening stages of this game were dire, Donegal led 1-5 to 0-6 at the break but they looked flat for long stages of the half. Armagh were sharper but hit seven wides in the first half and so the sides were locked two points apiece after 20 minutes.

In fact, the greatest drama of the opening stages came when Eamon McGee, Kieran McGeeney and Paul Grimley were all involved in a shoving match. It got the crowd going, at least. Something had to.

Formation-wise, it was all very cautious. The sight of Michael Murphy and Jamie Clarke, two of most natural forwards in the game, being forced into continuous lung-bursting defensive runs instead of leading their attacks never ceases to disappoint.

Clarke was so wrecked after his defensive runs that he gave away two frees at the other

end — both in scoring positions. Purists like him should be left in their natural habitat where they are most dangerous and beneficial to the team.

Anyway, once Donegal broke through and fired a fantastic goal through midfielder Odhrán MacNiallais in the 23rd minute, however, things finally started to open up. It was a lovely, left-footed finish from MacNiallais but Philip McEvoy will not be happy to have been beaten at his near post.

After that, Murphy went into full-forward and stayed there for a while. It gave his teammates a target to aim for and over the next 15 minutes they sucked Armagh into four fouls which they converted.

Although they were edging ahead they didn't score their first point from play until the 31st minute. Armagh, although trailing, looked to have more zip when they attacked. It remained to be seen whether experience — or youth — would prevail in the second.

After 45 minutes, Donegal had inched three points clear; 1-8 to 0-8, with Tony Kernan hitting a class point for Armagh and Paddy McBrearty (after shooting three wides) nailing an equal thing of beauty moments later.

A series of substitutions were made as legs tired but 25 minutes to go it looked like the game was Donegal's. Aaron Kernan pulled one back with a class effort from his left foot — incredible to think that he had been left out of the team previously. But struggling to keep up their high-octane game, they went to the bench, took Kevin Dyas off and brought on Rory Grugan after 55 minutes.

Then a moment of magic. A raiding Armagh run down the right wing found Grugan, he fed Brian Mallon who centred for the on-running Campbell, a man with relentless energy. He palmed home Armagh's goal to put them a point up.

With excitement levels rising, Neil Gallagher, another who was enjoying magnificent spells at varying stages, replied with a great individual point.

With seven on the clock Michael Murray jinked, twisted and turned to find space and fire over a gem. It was tight and tense but the underdogs held the lead. At the other end Donegal hit their 10th wide of the half.

Michael Murphy finally notched his first point from play to level the scores and 20 seconds later McBrearty put them ahead again — two key forwards doing what they do best — scoring when it counted. In the space of a minute Donegal had gone from being one down to going one up.

Ultimately, that was enough.
Scorers — Donegal: M Murphy 0-5 (4f), O MacNiallais 1-1, C McFadden 0-2 (1f), P McBrearty 0-2 each, N Gallagher, N McGee 0-1 each. **Armagh:** T Kernan 0-4 (1f), A Kernan 0-2 (1f), S Campbell 1-1, A Mallon, K Carragher, A Forker 0-1 each. **Donegal:** P Durcan, E McGee, N McGee, F McGlynn, A Thompson, K Lacey, P McGrath, N Gallagher, O MacNiallais; C Toye, L McLoone, R McHugh; P McBrearty, M Murphy, C McFadden. **Subs:** R Kavanagh for C Toye (43), M McElhinney for L McLoone (55), D O'Connor for C McFadden (58), M O'Reilly for McBrearty (72).

Armagh: P McEvoy, F Moriarty, C Vernon, A Mallon, M Shields, B Donaghy, A Kernan, S Harold, A Findon; A Forker, K Dyas, T Kernan; K Carragher, S Campbell, J Clarke. **Subs:** B Mallon for K Carragher (41), E Rafferty for A Findon (45), R Grugan for K Dyas (54), M Murray for A Forker (58), K Toner for S Harold (65).

Referee: J McQuillan (Cavan)

CHAMPIONSHIP 2014



Blue tornado set to blow away Donegal's high defensive fence

Martin Breheny

JIM MCGUINNESS mentioned poor decision-making as one of Donegal's negatives during the quarter-final win over Armagh, reflecting that it was an unusual lapse for a squad whose achievements during the past three years were all grounded in good judgement.

He did not need to stress the point that unless they correct that aspect of their game, they will be well beaten tomorrow. The quarter-final was an extension of an Ulster championship where runners-up, Monaghan were trimmed by Dublin, so questions arise about the overall standard in the north this year.

Other than Dublin, the standard was definitely sub-standard in Leinster, who lost no fewer than six of 11 counties in the first two qualifier rounds. Runners-up, Meath later lost by five points to Armagh.

Dublin towered above all their Leinster rivals, before scattering Monaghan's challenge to the four corners of Croke Park.

Now, they are expected to add Donegal to their extensive championship casualty list during Jim Gavin's 20-month reign.

However, there's one distinct difference between Donegal and all of Dublin's previous victims – they are master defenders.

They frustrated Dublin to the point of distraction in the 2011 All-Ireland semi-final and might well have won if Colm McFadden's drive had gone under, rather than over, the bar early in the second half, at a time when Donegal were leading by two points.

In the end, Donegal just couldn't back up their defensive solidity with enough attacking creativity to win. They worked on that area of their game in 2012 and the better balance took them on a glorious trail.

The big question now is: are Donegal as good as they were two years ago? Probably not. And are Dublin better than in 2011? Yes.

Put the two together and the inevitable conclusion is that Dublin will win. It will, of course, be fascinating to see how McGuinness goes about

GUIDE TO THE GAME DONEGAL v DUBLIN

TOMORROW

All-Ireland SF semi-final
Donegal v Dublin, Croke Park, 3.30
Ref: J McQuillan (Cavan)
Live on RTE & Sky Sports

PATHS TO THE SEMI-FINAL

DONEGAL

■ Donegal 1-11	Derry 0-11
■ Donegal 3-16	Antrim 0-12
■ Donegal 0-15	Monaghan 1-9
■ Donegal 1-12	Armagh 1-11
Average For: 1-15; Average Against: 1-10	

Top Donegal scorers

M Murphy	0-14 (0-9 f, 0-1 '45', 0-1 sideline)
O MacNiallais	1-8
L McLoone	2-3
C McFadden	0-9 (0-7 frees)

DUBLIN

■ Dublin 2-21	Laois 0-16
■ Dublin 2-25	Wexford 1-12
■ Dublin 3-20	Meath 1-10
■ Dublin 2-22	Monaghan 0-11
Average For: 2-23 Average Against: 1-11	

Top Dublin scorers

B Brogan	2-14 (0-10 frees)
C Costello	1-10
D Connolly	2-6 (0-2 frees)

PREVIOUS CHAMPIONSHIP CLASHES

2011: Dublin 0-8 Donegal 0-6 (All-Ireland semi-final)
2002: Dublin 1-14 Donegal 0-7 (All-Ireland quarter-final replay)
2002: Dublin 2-8 Donegal 0-14 (All-Ireland quarter-final)
1992: Donegal 0-18 Dublin 0-14 (All-Ireland final)

IT'S A FACT:

Both teams ave failed to score a goal in three of their last five semi-finals.

ODDS

Dublin 1/10; Donegal 7/1; Draw 18/1

WHAT'S NEXT:

Winners play Kerry or Mayo in the All-Ireland final on September 21.

kicking from wide angles and long distances.

They sorted it out eventually but not before looking completely lost in Donegal's defensive quicksand.

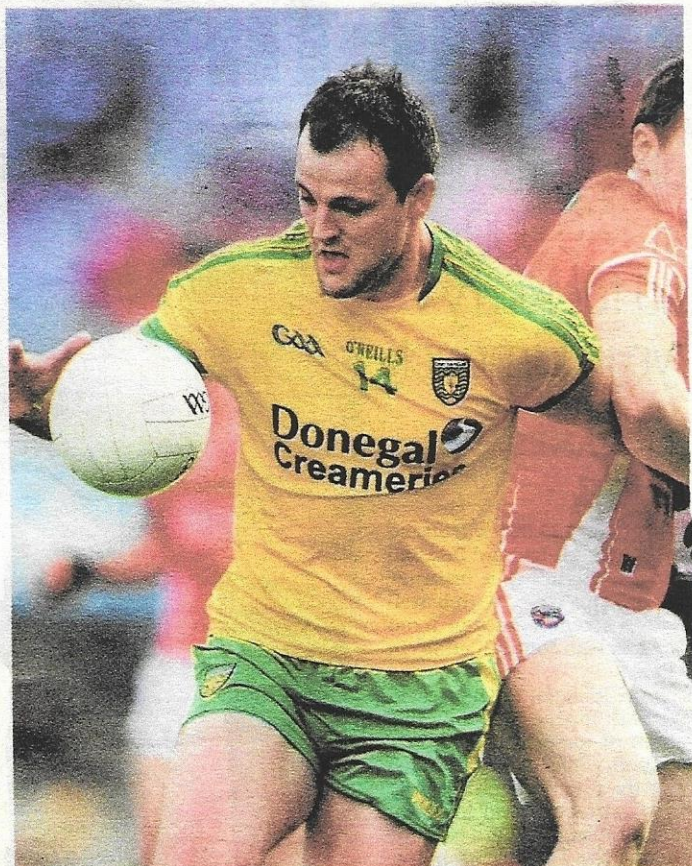
Donegal haven't scored a goal against Dublin in any of their previous four championship clashes. They will need at least two to have a real chance of winning tomorrow and even then, it's probably beyond them.

DONEGAL (probable):

P Durcan; E McGee, N McGee, F McGlynn; A Thompson, K Lacey, P McGrath; N Gallagher, O MacMiallais; C Toye, L McLoone, R McHugh; P McBrearty, M Murphy, C McFadden.

DUBLIN: S Cluxton; M Fitzsimons, R O'Carroll, P McMahon; J McCarthy, J Cooper, N Devereux; MD Macauley, C O'Sullivan; P Flynn, K McManamon, D Connolly; A Brogan, E O'Gara, B Brogan.

VERDICT – Dublin



Michael Murphy's tactical deployment will be crucial to Donegal's hopes

All-Ireland SFC Semi-final

Dominant Donegal dismantles Dublin dream

Jim McGuinness's team rediscover the spirit of 2012 as holders are brushed aside
Ulster champions produce an exceptional all-round display to dismantle Dublin

Referee: Joe McQuillan (Cavan)
Attendance: 81,500



Scán Moran
at Croke Park

small in the rear-view mirror, came to Croke Park and both overpowered and outplayed champions Dublin whose iron-clad hold on football for the past 18 months – and in the minds of some into the conceivable future – was shattered.

They dismantled the fashionable theory that they couldn't chase a match by turning the glittering array of Dublin's early points on their head in a first half that showcased the best football of the championship.

This semi-final triumph was no streaky, seat-of-the-pants flop over the line while unexpected misfortune undermined Dublin. Donegal manager Jim McGuinness sent out a team with the self-belief after a difficult couple of years, motivation

and above all presence of mind to execute a straightforward game plan.

McGuinness said afterwards that football wasn't about all-out attack or all-out defence but a combination of both.

Quibbles

Some of the quibbles about Dublin's progress to date – not having been properly tested nor even having played a Division One county so far this summer – had sounded like whistling in the dark in recent weeks. But by the end of the afternoon, the reservations had acquired unexpected resonance.

This was Donegal's best display in championship since the All-Ireland-winning season of 2012 and Dublin's worst of Jim Gavin's two years. The champi-

Donegal	First Half	Second Half	Total
Goals	1	2	3
Points	8	6	14
Wides	4	2	6
Frees	10	7	17
45s	0	0	0
Yellow cards	1	1	2
Black cards	0	2	2
Red cards	0	0	0

Dublin	First Half	Second Half	Total
Goals	0	0	0
Points	10	7	17
Wides	4	10	14
Frees	4	10	14
45s	1	0	1
Yellow cards	1	0	1
Black cards	0	0	0
Red cards	0	0	0

ons' almost total loss of composure undermined their efforts to sustain a viable comeback.

Donegal had them where they wanted them: making hare-brained, flailing attacks, which when they broke down, were turned into swift counter-attacks that kept the scoreboard moving along nicely, while demoralising Dublin.

So much of what happened must have appeared like a dark mirror for Dublin supporters.

So much focus on the legendarily claustrophobic semi-final of 2011 ill-prepared the football public for a winning total of 3-14 from Donegal.

Completely unfancied

McGuinness has always lamented the team's inability to get its attacking game in order that day and the widely derided final score of 0-8 to 0-6 told the tale.

Yesterday though more accurately referenced the counties' first championship meeting in the All-Ireland final of 1992 when completely unfancied Donegal shocked the favourites to win the county's first Sam Maguire.

Coming in at a remote 6 to 1, Donegal also had to endure a most unpromising start. Having got on the board first with a Michael Murphy free, the Ulster champions were subjected to a barrage of fast-moving attacks and impeccable long-range shooting.

Paul Flynn – with Diarmuid Connolly one of the only two Dublin players to play to form – launched strikes from around the 45-metre line. This textbook unravelling of the massed defence was supplemented by a particularly wounding close-in concession – turning over the Donegal defence for Bernard Brogan to point.

Nor was the threat confined to points. In the 12th minute Eoghan O'Gara bore in on goal and flicked a pass to Bernard Brogan who frustrated by a great covering block by Neil McGuinness.

Later when the margin was four, 0-4 to 0-8, Connolly was given a chance by Cormac Costello – a late change for Kevin McManamon – but Paul Durcan saved. That's Dublin, though: missing goal chances but plenty more where they came from.

If there were straws in the wind they came from Donegal's ability to poach points and not

fall too far behind – five points was the maximum – Rory Kavanagh's perseverance in the face of some disheartening setbacks and Neil Gallagher, a live man of the match contender with his brilliant display as a go-to man for attacking ball.

Karl Lacey scored a point, maybe tellingly racing into space with Alan Brogan left behind, whereas Michael Murphy gave yet another display of controlled selflessness, slugging it out for possession, moving in to threaten closer to goal and directing attacks. His flick into space for the team's third goal in the second half was a masterpiece of perceptiveness and ball winning power.

But the champions were in excellent form for most of the first half. Stephen Cluxton's kick-outs were spot on – a couple of exquisite flights into Alan Brogan's path included the platform for the latter's 23rd minute point.

The match began to turn in Donegal's favour with a run of scores and the introduction of Christy Toye before the half hour. He muscled into the match bringing hard running and strength in the tackle. Three points in two minutes cut away at the deficit and with momentum running, they struck for goal.

Colm McFadden smuggled the ball back after it had been broken by Dublin's defence and placed Ryan McHugh for a goal that gave Donegal a lead they would never lose.

Panic early

By the time Flynn kicked a point before the break Donegal had rattled off an unanswered 1-4. Like the Cork semi-final of 2012, their opponents had played at times scintillating stuff but Donegal now led.

The second half was damning for Dublin's reputation.

They appeared to panic early and were helped in this by the second goal in the 39th minute.

Cian O'Sullivan appeared to have held up Anthony Thompson but the Donegal player turned inside and set up McHugh for a goal, delicately palmed in past Cluxton before the Dublin goalkeeper could smother any shot.

Now it was Dublin who were challenged to chase the match and they showed a shocking lack of invention and composure by trying to barrel through their opponents' defence. But instead of looking for a shooter, the runner frequently kept driving on until the rearguard where the McGee brothers standing sentry were exceptional.

The third goal arrived in the 47th minute after Murphy's flick opened the road for Gallagher and Odhrán MacNiallais – who impressively got to the pitch of the match after the whirlwind adversity of the early stages – provided for McFadden who crowned his return to form with a goal, nimbly side-stepping Cluxton.

It was over. All that remained were the increasingly frantic efforts by Dublin to score something but so wild was the finishing that wides outnumbered scores – a sobering

DUBLIN: 1. Stephen Cluxton; 4. Philip McMahon (0-1); 3. Rory O'Carroll; 2. Michael Fitzsimons; 24. Jack McCaffrey; 6. Jonny Cooper; 5. James McCarthy; 8. Michael Darragh Macauley; 9. Cian O'Sullivan; 10. Paul Flynn (0-4); 13. Alan Brogan (0-2); 12. Diarmuid Connolly (0-5, 0-1 free); 20. Cormac Costello; 14. Eoghan O'Gara; 15. Bernard Brogan (0-3, one free); Subs: 11. Kevin McManamon for Costello (41 mins); 26. Dean Rock for O'Gara (48 mins); 17. Paddy Andrews (0-2) for Brogan (53 mins); 22. Darren Daly for Cooper (62 mins); 23. Paul Mannion for O'Sullivan (68 mins); Yellow card: McCarthy (1 min)

DONEGAL: 1. Paul Durcan; 3. Neil McGuinness; 4. Eamonn McGuinness; 5. Anthony Thompson; 6. Karl Lacey (0-1); 7. Frank McGlynn (0-1); 26. Rory Kavanagh (0-1); 9. Odhrán MacNiallais (0-1); 18. David Walsh; 11. Leo McLoone; 12. Ryan McHugh (2-2); 15. C. McFadden (1-3, 0-2 frees); 14. M. Murphy (0-3, 0-2 frees); 8. Neil Gallagher; Subs: 10. Christy Toye for Walsh (27 mins); 13. Patrick McBrearty (0-2) for McLoone (43 mins); 19. Declan Walsh for McGuinness (black card, 58 mins); 24. Martin McElhinney for Kavanagh (60 mins); 17. Darach O'Connor for McFadden (64 mins); 25. Martin O'Reilly for MacNiallais (68 mins); Yellow cards: Gallagher (7 mins); Murphy (62 mins); Black cards: N. McGuinness (58 mins); McGrath (73 mins)



ALL IRELAND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2014 SEMI FINAL



GAA - ALL-IRELAND SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

Score by Score

1 min: The game has barely begun and Dublin's James McCarthy is booked for flooring Rory Kavanagh. Michael Murphy points with an easy free to give Donegal the lead. Dublin 0-0 Donegal 0-1

2 min: Paul Flynn shoots from distance and levels the game with a superb point. Dublin 0-1 Donegal 0-1

2 min: Bernard Brogan wins a ball from the Donegal defence after nobody deals with a huge up-and-under and fires over. Dublin 0-2 Donegal 0-1

3 min: Diarmaid Connolly with a superb shot from distance, Donegal's defence stay too far off and Dublin extend their lead. Dublin 0-3 Donegal 0-1

5 min: Dublin's flying start has Donegal at sixes and sevens in the early stages and Flynn fires over to extend Donegal's lead. Dublin 0-4 Donegal 0-1

12 min: Good build up from Donegal and Michael Murphy spots Karl Lacey's overlap. The Four Masters man points with ease to leave two between the teams. Dublin 0-4 Donegal 0-2

15 min: Donegal are back in the game after a shaky start but Dublin extend their lead when Paul Flynn scores Dublin's first since the 5th minute with another great score from distance. Dublin 0-5 Donegal 0-2

16 min: Connolly adds another point for Dublin with another exceptional long-range score. Dublin 0-6 Donegal 0-2

18 min: Philly McMahon extends Dublin's lead to five points with another point from distance. Dublin 0-7 Donegal 0-2

20 min: Michael Murphy with a free from an awkward angle makes it a four-point game. Dublin 0-7 Donegal 0-3

22 min: Alan Brogan finishes a move started by Cluxton and Dublin edge further ahead again. Dublin 0-8 Donegal 0-3

23 min: But Donegal are not letting the All-Ireland champions out of their sight and Rory Kavanagh makes up for an earlier miss by pointing after a good build up. Dublin 0-8 Donegal 0-4

25 min: At the other end superb footwork from Diarmuid Connolly sells three Donegal players before firing over an excellent score Dublin 0-9 Donegal 0-4

27 min: But once again Donegal respond. This time Christy Toye, in as a sub, drives at Dublin and feeds Ryan McHugh who dropped one short earlier but this time fires a brilliant point over the bar. Dublin 0-9 Donegal 0-5

28 min: The momentum is with Donegal now and Odhran MacNiallais follows that McHugh point up with a great score. Dublin 0-9 Donegal 0-6

29 min: And Dublin can't seem to understand what's happening now as MacNiallais feeds Murphy who wellies the ball over with a bit of anger, minutes after dropping one short. Dublin 0-9 Donegal 0-7

32 min: Goal for Donegal! Ryan McHugh finds the net after Murphy contests high ball with Cluxton, and then wins the ball and feeds McFadden. He picks out McHugh driving in and he scoots the ball under the legs of a defender to score Donegal's first ever championship goal against Dublin. Dublin 0-9 Donegal 1-7

34 min: It's all change now and Colm McFadden's free extends Donegal's lead to two. Dublin 0-9 Donegal 1-8

35 min: Paul Flynn with a long range point leaves just one between the sides as the teams head to the break Dublin 0-10 Donegal 1-8

Half time

After a sluggish start Donegal go in at the interval ahead by one Dublin 0-10 Donegal 1-8

38 min: Goal for Donegal. The Dublin defence is shocked again as a super build up from Donegal down the right sees Anthony Thompson race in on goal. He finds the unmarked Ryan McHugh who ghosts in and fists home. Dublin 0-10 Donegal 2-8

39 min: Ryan McHugh is involved again as Donegal extend their lead, feeding McFadden who fists over. Dublin 0-10 Donegal 2-9

40 min: Alan Brogan responds from distance with a fine score. Donegal 2-9 Dublin 0-11

40 min: Bernard Brogan scores with his right foot as Dublin respond again. Dublin 0-12 Donegal 2-9

43 min: Brilliant block from Neil Gallagher sets Donegal on the counter. Paddy McBrearty off the bench drives forward, feeds Frank McGlynn who curls over a lovely point. Dublin 0-12 Donegal 2-10

46 min: Goal. Odhran MacNiallais drives at Dublin this time. Donegal have men over and Colm McFadden is the man he finds, skipping around Cluxton to blast home and put Donegal ahead by seven! Dublin 0-12 Donegal 3-10

47 min: A Colm McFadden free extends the Donegal lead. Dublin 0-12 Donegal 3-11

48 min: Great point from Diarmuid Connolly responds for Dublin who need to find a way back into the game quickly if they are to hold on to any chance of retaining their title. Dublin 0-13 Donegal 3-11

50 min: Neil Gallagher gives away a free in front of goal and easy free gives Bernard Brogan chance to narrow the gap. Dublin 0-14 Donegal 3-11

53 min: Ryan McHugh fed by Murphy goes for goal and sees his shot brilliantly saved by Cluxton but it goes over for a point. Dublin 0-15 Donegal 3-12

54 min: Connolly responds again with a point for Dublin who can't narrow the gap enough. Dublin 0-15 Donegal 3-12

56 min: Diarmuid Connolly's free - a very soft one - reduces the Donegal lead. Dublin 0-16 Donegal 3-12

59 min: Brilliant determined run from Paddy McBrearty drives at Dublin and fires over. Dublin 0-16

Donegal 3-13

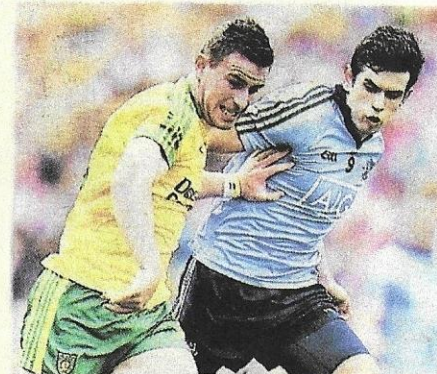
63 min: Paddy McBrearty again after another booming kick out. Dublin have no answer now to a rampant Donegal going forward and a disciplined Donegal in defence. Dublin 0-16 Donegal 3-14

67 min: Paddy Andrews taps over as Dublin counter attack as the seconds tick away, but it's too little too late for the All-Ireland champions who have to let their go grip on Sam. Dublin 0-17 Donegal 3-14

Full Time

Donegal 3-14 Dublin 0-17

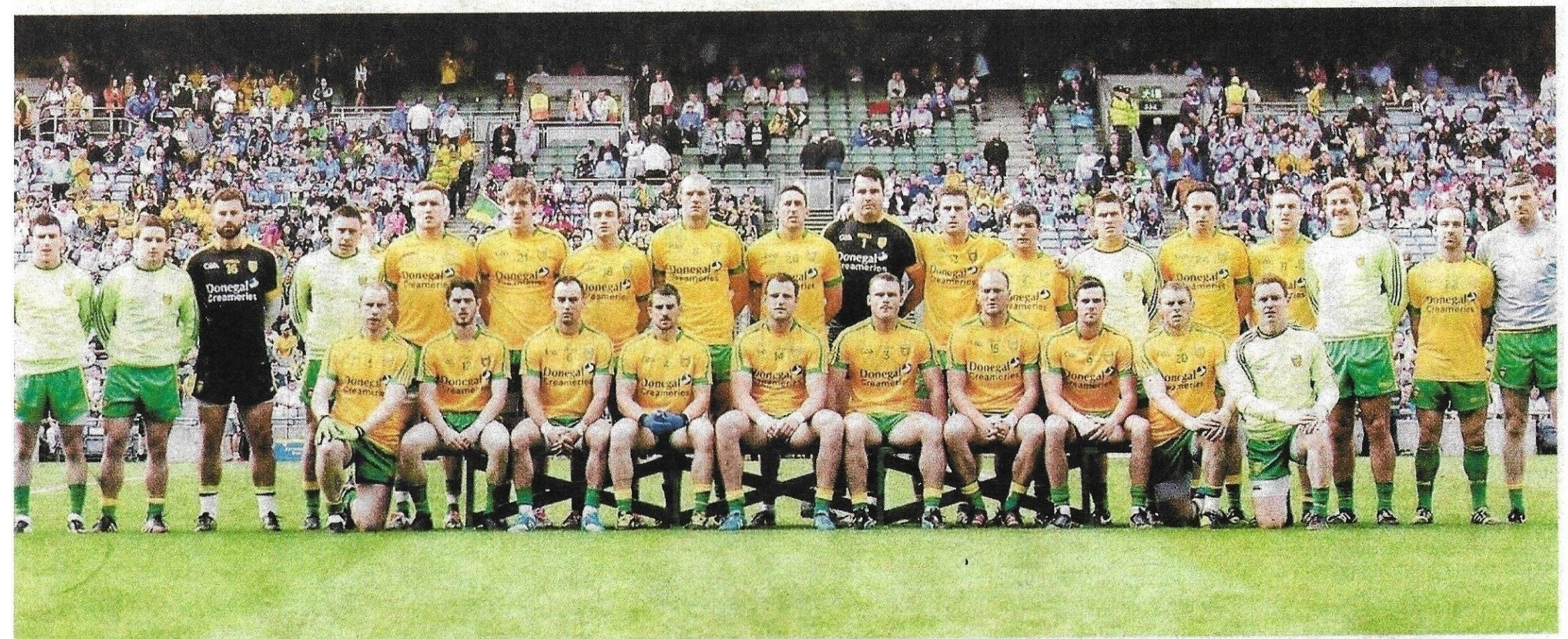


Nobody outside Donegal gave them any hope but Donegal again defy the odds to win superbly and set up a memorable day in Croke Park against Kerry in the All-Ireland final.



in action against Cian O'Sullivan.

Paddy McBrearty: McBrearty was introduced for Leo McLoone and he was outstanding. He scored two wonderful points and you could feel a buzz around Croke Park when he was in possession. 9

ALL IRELAND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
2014 SEMI FINAL



Donegal senior team



ALL-IRELAND FINAL 2014

Kerry's resolve holds as errors undo Donegal

MAN OF THE MATCH

Kieran Donaghy (Kerry)

Top scorer from open play on 1-2, he waged a one-man war close to the Donegal goal. His awareness and opportunism for his 52nd-minute goal was the ultimate game-changer.



Donaghy goal the decisive act of sub-standard final

MARTIN BREHENY


KERRY	2-9
DONEGAL	0-12

ALL-IRELAND SFC FINAL

KERRY have won better All-Ireland finals at the end of superior campaigns than Championship 2014 but, for pure satisfaction and vindication, yesterday's success takes some beating.

Their 37th All-Ireland triumph arrived in a season which started with what looked like a calamitous setback when Colm Cooper was ruled out for the year and when their Allianz League campaign lurched unsteadily before ending with a thumping defeat by Cork.

And while early-season travails haven't been known to destabilise Kerry down through the years, there was a distinct feeling last April that this season would be more of a work-in-progress than the finished article.

In a sense, that's still the case but, to their delight, they discovered that not only could they prosper without The Gooch, they were also good enough to outwit all-comers.

FAVOURITES

That included Donegal, who were hoisted into the favourites' stall after chopping down defending champions, Dublin with ruthless force in the semi-final. They hit Dublin for 3-14, but came up 11 points short of that total yesterday.

It left Kerry's 2-9 as more than enough to see them safely home in what was the lowest-scoring All-Ireland final since 2003 when Tyrone outpointed Armagh by 0-12 to 0-9.

It was the first time since 1996 that 11 scores were enough to win the All-Ireland final, another telling

indicator of how much on top defences were. It coalesced into producing a contest which certainly won't be lodging an application for inclusion in the catalogue of classics.

All of which is utterly irrelevant to Kerry, who worked their way calmly and resolutely through a Donegal challenge that was uncharacteristically sloppy at times.

Precision under pressure has been a hallmark of Donegal in the Jim McGuinness era but that was often absent yesterday, not least for the concession of both goals, which proved so influential.

Donegal had given away only two goals in their five-win march to the final, but were breached in the first minute yesterday.

Stephen O'Brien's speculative hoist towards the Donegal goal didn't look especially threatening but Kerry corner-forward Paul Geaney made the most of it, fetching and turning in a slick double-movement before angling the ball past Paul Durcan.

Kieran Donaghy followed up with a point in the fourth minute and, suddenly, a high-scoring encounter looked possible.

If only! The next 47 minutes produced a total of 10 points, in a 7-3 split to Donegal, leaving it all square after 51 minutes. The standard of finishing dipped alarmingly in the 15 minutes after half-time, with Kerry shooting five wides and Donegal four.

Kerry sub Barry John Keane nudged Kerry ahead with a pointed free in the 52nd minute before Paul Durcan's catastrophic error gifted Kerry the goal which effectively decided the game.

His short kick-out was seriously misdirected, allowing Donaghy to intercept, and in a matter of seconds, the ball was nestling in the Donegal net, leaving them facing another big salvage effort.

They achieved it after falling four points behind early in the first half and looked as if they might do likewise when they kicked 0-3 in a three-minute spell after Donaghy's goal

It left them a point adrift after 55 minutes, but they just couldn't land the equaliser. Instead, it was Kerry, who hit another golden streak, pointing three times between the 57th and 61st minutes, before Donegal cut two points off the deficit.

Significantly, though, Kerry were playing from the front, enabling them to be patient in possession.

And since it was very difficult to break down the Donegal defence, Kerry had no reason to take risks in the closing minutes.

Instead, they guarded possession carefully and methodically, passing across the pitch and even funnelling backwards as Donegal desperately tried to hunt them down.

Kerry's patience was rewarded in the 68th minute when they earned a long-range free, which sub Bryan Sheehan pointed.

It left Donegal needing a goal to snatch a draw and the chance did arise in the final minute when Michael Murphy (who could have been penalised for charging) placed McBreaty as he bore down on the Kerry goal.

His shot was parried by Kerry goalkeeper Brian Kelly and, as the ball broke loose, Colm McFadden got a hand to it but, to Donegal's despair, it clipped the goalpost.

It was Donegal's final chance on a day when their defensive instincts weighed too heavily on them.

Restricting the opposition is a laudable tactic, but it has to be accompanied by a workable method of organising score-building moves.

Apart from the lead-in to both goals, Donegal did well on the defensive side of their game but not on the attacking front.

Their starting forwards scored only two points from open play, none until the 29th minute, leaving them largely reliant on frees in the first half to nibble into Kerry's lead.

That process was helped enormous-

ly by Eddie Kinsella's take on things as he awarded 10 frees to Donegal in the first half, compared to one for Kerry. It was difficult to fathom why the differential was so marked.

It was level at half-time (1-3 to 0-6), a situation which appeared more pleasing for Donegal who had out-scored Kerry by 0-6 to 0-2 after the early setbacks.

The third quarter has been consistently productive for Donegal in recent years and when Murphy, who had a frustrating day overall, pointed them into the lead in the 38th minute, it raised serious questions of Kerry.

Their response was impressive in difficult circumstances. With James O'Donoghue being forced ever further from goal and under intense pressure from Neil McGee, Kerry's scoring threat wasn't anything like as potent as it had been earlier in the campaign.

Donaghy was waging a one-man war against a heavily manned defence close to Durcan's goal and while he did it extremely well, it was still difficult to see how Kerry would create a second goal.

They opted for long range shooting in an attempt to out-manoeuvre Donegal but were let down by inaccuracy. It really was finely balanced until Durcan's mistake handed Donaghy the precious three-pointer at a crucial stage of proceedings.

Donegal were left deeply frustrated by a performance which had so little in common with the semi-final success that it looked like a completely different team.

But then, Kerry presented a much-different challenge to Dublin, opting instead to take a leaf out of

Donegal's defensive book.

They actually did it better than Donegal, especially in the closing minutes when retaining possession was so important. And with gods having smiled on them for Donaghy's goal, they weren't going to be denied.

SCORERS - Kerry: P Geaney (1f), K Donaghy 1-2 each, BJ Keane 0-2 (2fs), P Murphy, B Sheehan (f), J Buckley 0-1 each. **Donegal:** M Murphy 0-4 (3f), P McBreaty 0-2, C McFadden, O MacNiallais, K Lacey, N McGee, D Molloy, C Toyne 0-1 each. **KERRY -** B Kelly; M O Se, A O Mahony, F Fitzgerald; P Murphy, P Crowley, K Young, A Maher, D Moran, D Walsh, S O'Brien, J Buckley; P Geaney, K Donaghy, J O'Donoghue. **Subs:** M Geaney for O'Brien (h-t), BJ Keane for P Geaney (49), S Enright for Fitzgerald (55), Declan O'Sullivan for Walsh (57), B Sheehan for Moran (68), K O'Leary for Donaghy. **DONEGAL -** P Durcan, N McGee, E McGee, P McGrath; A Thompson, K Lacey, F McGlynn; R Kavanagh, N Gallagher, O MacNiallais, L McLone, R McHugh; C McFadden, M Murphy, D O'Connor. **Subs:** C Toyne for O'Connor (28), P McBreaty for McHugh (46), M McElhinney for MacNiallais (52), D Walsh for McLone (57), D Molloy for Kavanagh (64). **REF -** E Kinsella (Laois)

ALL-IRELAND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

Early goal and sucker punch from Kieran Donaghy enough to give Kerry their 37th All-Ireland title

DONEGAL	0-12
KERRY	2-9

PETER CAMPBELL
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Donegal had to settle for second best after a battle in Croke Park with the game turning on a second half goal by Kieran Donaghy.

They say goals win games and it was especially true in this senior final. Kerry got one with the first attack and then were gifted one ten minutes into the second half when Kieran Donaghy intercepted Paul Durcan's kick out and hit the decisive score.

Donegal battled back to get within a point and then at the very end were denied by the post as Colm McFadden almost got them a draw.

It was one of those days when certain things did not go right, but overall Kerry proved up for the battle and probably just about deserved the victory.

Donegal started with Darach 'Jigger' O'Connor on the starting team, something

of a surprise while Rory Kavanagh's inclusion was anticipated.

The first half was a real game of cat and mouse but despite that both sides had a number of goal scoring opportunities.

Only one goal was put on the board and that came before the first minute had ended with Paul Geaney fielding a long ball on the edge of the square and firing low to the corner, deceiving Paul Durcan.

It looked like a disastrous start for Donegal when a high ball came back off the upright on three minutes and Kieran Donaghy had the simple task of firing over.

It took Donegal a little while to get going but Leo McLoone, who had a storming first half, won a free on five minutes and Michael Murphy settled matters with a free. They had to wait until the 12th minute for their second point, Murphy availing of the award being moved on and firing over from 47m.

Paul Geaney pointed a free for Kerry after Donaghy engineered a free for himself and the Donegal line had a narrow escape when a long ball hopped over everybody including the



advancing Paul Durcan and went just wide.

Leo McLoone won another free for Michael Murphy to point for the third time on 16 minutes and when Murphy took another free short to Ryan McHugh, he won a free and Colm McFadden had Donegal back within a point on 22 minutes.

They almost got in for a goal two minutes later when Rory Kavanagh made a great break and released Darach O'Connor but the young Buncrana man just couldn't find the range from a narrow angle and the ball trickled wide.

At the other end, Donegal were lucky to escape when Paul Geaney - their biggest tormentor in the opening half - won another high ball and dummied but fired over the crossbar from point blank range.

Christy Toye came in for O'Connor on 27 minutes and immediately made an impact, just as he did against Dublin. The St. Michael's man released Odhran MacNiallais and even though the Gaith Dobhair man was dispossessed, the ball fell for him and he first timed over the cross-

bar from 30m.

Four minutes from the break, the Donegal wave of attack was rewarded again when Anthony Thompson found Karl Lacey and he levelled matters with his left. Lacey had another chance just before the half-time whistle, again after great work by Leo McLoone, but his effort went just wide.

Half-time: Donegal 0-6, Kerry 1-3.

Two minutes into the second half Donegal took the lead for the only time in the game when Leo McLoone lost possession but it fell to Michael Murphy to fire over from distance.

However, Kerry responded with Paul Murphy firing over from under the Cusack Stand.

After a period of stalemate Kerry were back in front on 50 when Barry John Keane pointed a free.

But it was what happened a minute later that was the big turning point. Kieran Donaghy got a hand to Paul Durcan's kick-out and he was then one-on-one with Durcan and fired to the net.

Donegal, to their credit, responded magnificently with three points in three minutes. Michael Murphy and Martin



RYAN MCHUGH

The young Kilcar man has had a great season but against a very physical Kerry side he found the going really tough. Never had the influence that he had against Dublin in semi-final.



PATRICK MCBREARTY

Like Christy Toye, made a massive contribution and looked like he could trouble the Kerry defence. Hit two points and also like Christy, could have been an argument that he should have started.

McElhinney created points for Patrick McBrearty and McElhinney found Neil McGee up from defence to fire over and leave just a point in it again.

Johnny Buckley hit a magnificent point to edge Kerry two clear and Billy John Keane (free) and Kieran Donaghy (with his fist) pushed Kerry four clear with nine minutes left.

Dermot Molloy replaced Rory Kavanagh and with his first touch found the range and Christy Toye landed another to cut the deficit to two with five minutes left.

But Donegal were unable to get the goal they needed. Bryan Sheehan came on to fire over a 45m free on 68 minutes as they played keep ball. It was working until two minutes into added time when Michael Murphy burst through and found Patrick McBrearty. From close range his effort was half-blocked but it fell to Colm McFadden, who dived and palmed towards the net from a tight angle but he was denied by the post.

It was to be the final chance as referee Eddie Kinsella sounded the final whistle.

Donegal: Paul Durcan;

Eamon McGee, Neil McGee (0-1), Paddy McGrath; Anthony Thompson, Karl Lacey (0-1), Frank McGlynn; Neil Gallagher, Rory Kavanagh; Odhran MacNiallais (0-1), Leo McLoone, Ryan McHugh; Darach O'Connor, Michael Murphy (0-4,3f), Colm Anthony McFadden (0-1,f). Subs., Christy Toye (0-1) for O'Connor 27; Patrick McBrearty (0-2) for McHugh 45; Martin McElhinney for MacNiallais 49; David Walsh for McLoone 57; Dermot Molloy (0-1) for Kavanagh 64.

Kerry: Brian Kelly; Marc O Se, Aidan O'Mahony, Fionn Fitzgerald; Paul Murphy (0-1), Peter Crowley, Killian Young; Anthony Maher, David Moran; Stephen O'Brien, Johnny Buckley (0-1), Donnchadh Walsh; Paul Geaney (1-2,0-1f), Kieran Donaghy (1-2), James O'Donoghue. Subs., Michael Geaney for O'Brien ht; Barry John Keane (0-2,2f) for P Geaney 49; Shane Enright for Fitzgerald 54; Declan O'Sullivan for D Walsh 57; Bryan Sheehan (0-1,f) for Moran 68; Kieran O'Leary for Donaghy 70.

Referee: Eddie Kinsella (Laois)

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2

LAOIS 1-09
 DONEGAL 2-19

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT O'MOORE PARK

DONEGAL made an emphatic statement of their Division 2 credentials as they steamrolled Laois on what was surely an excruciating first day at the League office for the new O'Moore boss, Tomas Ó Flatharta.

Goals from Odhrán MacNiallais and Colm McFadden in either half steered Jim McGuinness's team to an impressive win, on a day when the visitors had ten different scorers on the board.

The game was noteworthy for the useful first League start of MacNiallais and the fine contribution of debutant Hugh McFadden - who hit two points off the bench - but perhaps even more so for the shift of Christy Toye.

A hamstring injury to Buncrana teenager Darach O'Connor opened the door for Toye to come in for his first National League start since March 2012 - and the St Michael's man

MATCH STATS

LAOIS v DONEGAL

1	Goals	2
9	Points	19
7	Wides	8
1	45s	3
16	Frees awarded	22
3	Frees scored	4
2	Short efforts	2
0	Black cards	0
2	Yellow cards	2
1	Red cards	0

Booked: Laois - John O'Loughlin (35 mins), Mark Timmons (38 mins); Donegal - Colm McFadden (10 mins), Christy Toye (43 mins).

Sent off: Laois - Denis Booth (43 mins)

was heavily involved as Donegal took charge.

A McKenna Cup appearance against Queen's last month had been

Donegal lay down

Toye's only involvement in the green and gold since he came on in the 2012 All-Ireland final, but the experienced forward had the cobwebs swiftly wiped here.

When his card was punched in the 53rd minute, he had played a central role in 1-8 of the Donegal total, which read 2-11 as he headed down the tunnel, in the company of team surgeon Kevin Moran, after sustaining a nasty facial cut.

Toye was involved in some capacity in all of Donegal's first-half scores and it was a demonstration, perhaps, of the impact made the absence last year of a player who had made stellar impacts upon his introduction the previous summer.

Donegal kept Laois, who were every bit as insipid as Donegal had been inspired, scoreless for a 38-minute spell from the 24th minute of the game.

By the time the famine was ended by Ross Munnely, Ó Flatharta's League debut had become an ordeal, with the red card to corner-back Denis Booth in the 43rd minute for a dangerous, high challenge on Mark McHugh adding further woe.

On this evidence, it would not be totally wide of the mark to suggest that there won't be many teams of a lesser quality this spring. That said, it was certainly an encouraging Donegal display, and they displayed good levels on the gauge even when it evolved into a one-way shoot-out in the second half.

Any hopes Laois might've had went up in smoke 70 seconds into the second half. Leo McLoone made the ball, galloping forward with the ball at his toe. The Glenties man, soccer-style, off-loaded to McFadden, who smashed a stunning strike beyond the reach of Graham Brody.

Donegal already had a four-point lead by then, thanks largely to MacNiallais' goal in the twelfth minute. Toye and Murphy were involved at the outset, but the lead role was played by Anthony Thompson, whose unselfishness presented the chance to MacNiallais.

Thompson's lofted pass allowed the Gaoh Dohhair man palm home to mark the occasion of his first League start.

That came at a point where Laois led, Donal Kingston and Evan O'Carroll scoring after an opening-minute free from Michael Murphy.

O'Carroll might have raised the green flag after latching onto Kingston's ball over the top. Neil McGee contested that he was being held, but O'Carroll was allowed continue, only for Ryan McHugh's intervention to block the path and the big full-forward had to settle for a point.

Dermot Molloy squeezed over after a sweeping Tir Chonaill move that involved MacNiallais, Mark McHugh, Neil McGee and Toye.

Scores were swapped thick and fast over the next ten minutes as Munnely, twice, and midfielder John O'Loughlin responded after points off the boots of Molloy, Anthony Thompson and Toye, who curled over following a surge forward by Frank McGlynn.

Donegal finished the half well. Murphy nonchalantly sailed over a '45 after Frank McGlynn had been denied by a strong save from goalkeeper Graham Brody before Toye teed up the Donegal skipper for his third of the day soon after and Donegal headed for the changing rooms nursing a four-point lead, 1-6 to 0-5.

Donegal expended a great deal of energy during that opening 35 minutes and their margin might have been greater with a little more ruthlessness.

Colm McFadden saw an effort blocked by Denis Booth late in a half that will have been encouraging for McGuinness, his side having inflicted several warning shots in getting around the back of the hosts' rear-guard.

When McFadden slammed high to the net upon the resumption, it was curtains for Laois.

McFadden, Murphy, MacNiallais

and Patrick McBrearty, from long-range, kept the scoreboard ticking before sub Hugh McFadden announced his arrival with an excellent score from distance.

The Killybegs man added another and with Mark McHugh and Martin McElhinney - who hit two points inside thirty seconds - on target it meant that the 65th minute goal by O'Loughlin was little more than a footnote in the tale.

LAOIS: Graham Brody; Denis Booth, Mark Timmons, Peter O'Leary (0-1); Darren Strong, Padraig McMahon, Adam Ryan; Kevin Meaney, John O'Loughlin (1-1); James Finn, Donal Kingston (0-1, 1f), Billy Sheehan; Ross Munnely (0-4, 2f), Evan O'Carroll (0-1), David Conway (0-1). Subs: Paul Cahillane for Finn (half-time), Paul Begley for Ryan (half-time), Robbie Kehoe for Carroll (47 mins), Stephen Attridge for Sheehan (57 mins), Eoin Lowry for Attridge (70 mins).

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Ryan McHugh, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Frank McGlynn, Leo McLoone, Anthony Thompson (0-1); Rory Kavanagh, Martin McElhinney (0-2); Mark McHugh (0-1), Christy Toye (0-1), Odhrán MacNiallais (1-1); Colm McFadden (1-3, 2f), Michael Murphy (0-6, 2f, 2'45), Dermot Molloy (0-1). Subs: Declan Walsh for Lacey (42 mins), Hugh McFadden (0-2) for Kavanagh (47 mins), Patrick McBrearty (0-1) for Molloy (47 mins), Martin O'Reilly for Toye (53 mins), Éamonn Doherty for McGlynn (64 mins), Stephen McLaughlin for MacNiallais (67 mins).

REFEREE: Conor Lane (Cork)

early marker

**WEEKEND
SCOREBOARD**



**ALLIANZ NFL
DIVISION 1**

Derry	0-16	Kerry	0-14
Cork	0-16	Kildare	1-12
Tyrone	2-15	Mayo	0-16
Dublin	0-14	Westmeath	1-7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Cork	2	2	0	0	0-34	1-22	9	4
Dublin	2	2	0	0	2-22	2-17	5	4
Tyrone	2	1	1	0	4-27	1-30	6	3
Derry	2	1	1	0	1-31	2-26	2	3
Kildare	2	1	0	1	3-31	2-34	0	2
Kerry	2	0	0	2	1-24	2-24	-3	0
Mayo	2	0	0	2	2-33	4-34	-7	0
Westmeath	2	0	0	2	1-17	0-32	-12	0

DIVISION 2

Donegal	1-16	Galway	0-12
Laois	2-8	Louth	0-11
Monaghan	0-20	Meath	0-8
Down	2-7	Armagh	2-5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Donegal	2	2	0	0	3-35	1-21	20	4
Monaghan	2	1	1	0	0-34	1-19	12	3
Down	2	1	1	0	3-18	2-19	2	3
Meath	2	1	0	1	3-26	4-31	-8	2
Laois	2	1	0	1	3-17	2-30	-10	2
Armagh	2	0	1	1	3-18	2-23	-2	1
Louth	2	0	1	1	0-27	3-21	-3	1
Galway	2	0	0	2	4-23	4-34	-11	0

DIVISION 3

Fermanagh	2-13	Sligo	1-10
Limerick	2-11	Longford	0-11
Cavan	1-11	Offaly	0-8
Roscommon	1-16	Wexford	1-9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Roscommon	2	2	0	0	1-29	1-19	10	4
Cavan	2	2	0	0	2-23	0-19	10	4
Limerick	2	1	0	1	2-24	0-26	4	2
Fermanagh	2	1	0	1	2-24	2-22	2	2
Wexford	2	1	0	1	2-23	1-28	-2	2
Sligo	2	1	0	1	1-25	2-26	-4	2
Longford	2	0	0	2	0-21	2-24	-9	0
Offaly	2	0	0	2	0-20	2-25	-11	0

DIVISION 4

Wicklow	3-9	Antrim	1-13
Clare	0-11	Leitrim	1-8
London	P	Carlow	P
Tipperary	0-12	Waterford	1-9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Wicklow	2	2	0	0	6-22	2-21	13	4
Tipperary	2	1	1	0	2-36	2-17	19	3
Clare	2	1	1	0	3-21	2-17	7	3
Leitrim	2	1	1	0	2-19	1-17	5	3
Waterford	2	0	1	1	2-18	3-22	-7	1
Antrim	2	0	0	2	2-19	4-20	-7	0
London	1	0	0	1	1-8	3-13	-11	0
Carlow	1	0	0	1	1-8	2-24	-19	0

McGuinness targets Monaghan clash after sweeping Galway aside

DONEGAL	1-16
GALWAY	0-12

NFL DIVISION 2

John Fallon

DONEGAL manager Jim McGuinness believes that their eagerly anticipated clash with Ulster champions Monaghan in a few weeks will give him an indication of just how well they are going.

His men looked impressive in Pearse Stadium in Galway yesterday as they backed up their opening-round win away to Laois with another solid performance.

Now high-flying Monaghan will provide the test for their first home match and McGuinness is already looking forward to that clash.

"That's going to be a huge game obviously. With them playing well at the moment it's going to be a good test for us. It was similar to last week in many ways in that in the first half we were playing against a stiff breeze and our running game had to come into effect. We kicked 1-6 against a very stiff breeze in the first half and that gave us a platform to push on in the second-half.

"We would have liked to have pushed on more in the second half, ideally, but Galway came out strong and brought the game to us, but we showed a good bit of character at the end to tack on a good few scores."

Galway struggled to match Donegal's powerful running game with Rory Kavanagh and Martin McElhinney dominant around the middle of the field.

Former Kildare star James Kavanagh adopted a roving role and while he got on a lot of ball so too did his marker Karl Lacey.

Galway suffered a double blow towards the end of the first quarter as full-back Finian Hanley limped off with a leg injury before

Kavanagh and Dermot Molloy combined to set up Colm McFadden for the only goal of the game, a well-placed shot to the bottom-left corner after 14 minutes.

"That was the vital score, they were able to get ahead of us and keep that gap throughout," said Galway manager Alan Mulholland, whose side trailed by 1-6 to 0-4 at the interval.

"To give a team like Donegal a five-point lead was a bit too much but we asked the lads for an extra effort facing into that wind in the second half and we were very happy with the performance we had.

"We got it back to three and if we had kicked on we could have made it very interesting at the end but Donegal are a very experienced side and it was a little bit too difficult for us at present."

Eoin Concannon did most to get the Tribesmen moving after the restart and he kicked three excellent scores.

But at the other end Michael Murphy was tacking on some key points from play and placed balls, while Paddy McBrearty pushed them clear when he landed three points from play after coming on.

Galway never looked like getting in for the goal which would have given them a chance and it was Donegal who finished strongly to send out a clear signal that they again mean business this year.

Few would have expected them to target the league but two away wins on the trot sets them up nicely and their first home game with Monaghan is sure to attract a huge crowd to Letterkenny.

SCORERS - Donegal: C McFadden 1-4 (3fs), M Murphy 0-4 (2fs), P McBrearty 0-3; D Molloy 0-2; O Mac Niallais, R McHugh, D Walsh 0-1 each. Galway: P Conroy, E Concannon 0-3 each; G Sice 0-2, S Armstrong (f), M Martin, P Varley, D Cummins 0-1 each.

GALWAY - M Breathnach 6; D O'Neill 6; F Hanley 6; J Moore 7; S Denvir 6; J Duane 7; P Varley 6; P Conroy 7; T Flynn 6; G Sice 7; S Armstrong 6; G Bradshaw 6; M Martin 6; E Concannon 7; J Kavanagh 6. **Subs:** A Tierney 6 for Hanley (inj 12), G O'Donnell 7 for Denvir (33), D Comer 6 for Sice (63), D O'Connell 6 for Bradshaw (50), D Cummins 6 for Martin (55).

DONEGAL - P Durcan 6; K Lacey 9; N McGee 6; R McHugh 7; F McGlynn 6; L McLoone 7; A Thompson 6; R Kavanagh 8; M McElhinney 7; M McHugh 8; C Tovey 7; O Mac Niallais 7; C McFadden 9; M Murphy 8; D Molloy 7. **Subs:** D Walsh 6 for Lacey (68), N Gallagher 7 for Kavanagh (h-t), P McBrearty 8 for Tovey (43), A McFadden 6 for Molloy (48). **REF** - F Kelly (Longford)

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2

Donegal beat Ulster champions

DONEGAL 2-11
MONAGHAN 0-10

BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT O'DONNELL PARK

AN hour before throw-in, Fergus McGee, the public address announcer at O'Donnell Park, confirmed to patrons that the 2,700 seats in the stand had all been occupied.

By the time Barry Cassidy got proceedings underway, 6,500 spectators had taken station for a repeat of last year's Ulster final, expecting fireworks.

As League attendances go, it was impressive. Remember, only three years ago 7,385 turned up to Ballybofey to watch Donegal defeat Antrim in Jim McGuinness's first Championship game as the Donegal manager.

In last year's provincial decider, Monaghan laid the blocks early on with a blistering start, going five up before Donegal got a sniff of a score.

Goals by Odhrán MacNiallais and Colm McFadden saw Donegal take a strong grip here as Donegal returned to the top of Division 2, having made way for Down overnight. MacNiallais drilled home just seven minutes in and when McFadden netted eleven minutes later Monaghan were consigned to defeat.

Donegal were dominant in the first-half here, but could have been further ahead than the six points at half-time. They made an uncharacteristic amount of unforced turn-overs and did kick a couple of needless wides, but that is not to take away from what was a comfortable afternoon on which they were very impressive in spells. Given that they operated against the elements for an hour, it was certainly not too shoddy to have posted a seven-point win over the Ulster champions.

MacNiallais was superb while Ryan McHugh delivered another reminder of his talents. Both are players of some re-

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v MONAGHAN

2	Goals	0
11	Points	10
7	Wides	11
1	45s	1
16	Frees awarded	12
2	Frees scored	4
2	Short efforts	5
0	Black cards	0
1	Yellow cards	2
0	Red cards	0

ATTENDANCE 6,500

finement who slot quite nicely into Jim McGuinness's jigsaw, with the Donegal boss surely encouraged again by another fine display by his side to continue their unbeaten League form.

Donegal had been in form - posting away wins in Laois and Galway in their opening two fixtures - coming into this, their first home League game of the year, with a healthy points difference of +20.

McGuinness kept faith with the team that started three weeks ago in Salthill, rewarding the likes of Martin McElhinney, Christy Toye and Dermot Molloy - as well as McHugh and MacNiallais - for good recent performances.

They were to the fore as Donegal took command of things early on in a clear indication that this was a side meaning business.

Barry Cassidy played a good advantage after involvement by McHugh and Rory Kavanagh,

Donegal's Karl Lacey in action against Monaghan.

and it was captain Michael Murphy who off-loaded to the scampering MacNiallais. With the sea parting before him, the in-form Gaoth Dobhair man galloped on before unleashing a powerful effort beyond Rory Beggan.

It was a purposeful start by Donegal, still bruised by the excruciating memories that have lingered from Clones last July.

In the 18th minute, Donegal netted a second goal. While Molloy will be awarded the assist, McHugh deserves a fair dollop of credit, too, for it was from a magnificent pass by the Kilcar man that Donegal carved open the Farney rearguard.

Molloy took receipt of possession out on the left, before bursting in at a tight angle to lift across goal where the waiting McFadden turned home to open up a six-point lead.

Donegal were dominant by now but could perhaps have been a little more economical in attack.

That said, they were well on top, particularly in the physical stakes, where Kavanagh, McElhinney, Toye and Murphy gave Donegal a powerful foothold in the middle third.

McElhinney kicked a fine point from just shy of the '45 after the St Michael's man had sold a clever side-step to deceive his man and set up MacNiallais for a well-worked score.

Monaghan began with seven of the team that started last year's final, with Kieran Hughes coming in as a late inclusion having not been named in the side,

but Malachy O'Rourke's team couldn't recover from the set-backs of conceding those goals.

All-Star McManus was the sole scorer for the visitors in the first half and the Clontibret ace tucked over a late brace to leave the goals between them at the interval, 2-4 to 0-4.

Donegal might have had a third major in the 42nd minute, but Rory Beggan was out to smother from Leo McLoone after he was played in by a neat tap-over pass by sub Darach O'Connor, on his League debut.

In a show of the renewed depth at McGuinness's disposal, O'Connor was on in a triple substitution that included Neil Gallagher and Patrick McBrearty.

MacNiallais had hit another fine effort just prior to that and McBrearty landed an excellent brace of points, both of them from long range.

Fintan Kelly and Jack McCarron popped over two inside a minute, but Donegal were suffocating the supply lines to the now starved McManus inside.

To supplement McBrearty's pair of points, captain Michael Murphy hit his only score of the afternoon with a 50th minute free and McFadden polished off a fine move that involved McBrearty, Neil McGee and Anthony Thompson.

Monaghan did break the seal open, but Dermot Malone failed to get any conviction on his shot, with a tame effort easily saved by Paul Durcan, only for the referee to deem the 'keeper to have been outside the 13m line and McCarron was presented with a 'gimme' of a free.

Goalkeeper Beggan, from a '45, Dessie Mone and McManus clipped over for Monaghan late on, but this one was never in doubt.

Donegal had another sight of goal in the closing moments, but they went for the juggular with McLoone, O'Connor, McFadden and McGlynn all involved in a goal-mouth game of pinball that Mon-

aghan eventually survived, though McGlynn limped off with an injury that was not thought to be serious by the management.

MacNiallais fittingly finished well, setting up Declan Walsh's point and then adding the cherry himself, funnelling forward to take his tally to 1-3 and firmly scrawl his name upon the page marked: 'First XV'.

Ryan McHugh's was another contribution of some note, Martin McElhinney showed up well again and Rory Kavanagh performed well until his withdrawal.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Karl Lacey, Neil McGee, Ryan McHugh; Frank McGlynn, Leo McLoone, Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh (0-1), Martin McElhinney (0-1); Mark McHugh, Christy Toye, Odhrán MacNiallais (1-3); Colm McFadden (1-2, 1f), Michael Murphy (0-1, 1f), Dermot Molloy. Subs: Neil Gallagher for Kavanagh (42 mins), Patrick McBrearty (0-2) for Toye (42 mins), Darach O'Connor for Molloy (42 mins), Martin O'Reilly for McElhinney (63 mins), Declan Walsh (0-1) for McGlynn (69 mins).

MONAGHAN: Rory Beggan (0-1, 1'45); Ryan Wylie, Drew Wylie, Fintan Kelly (0-1); Colin Walshe, Kieran Hughes, Conor Boyle; Gavin Doogan, Paul Finlay; Thomas Kerr, Chris McGuinness, Padraic Keenan; Dermot Malone, Jack McCarron (0-2, 1f), Conor McManus (0-5, 3f).

Subs: Padraig Donaghy for Kerr (26 mins); Dick Clerkin for Finlay (half-time), Karl O'Connell for Keenan (half-time), Dessie Mone (0-1) for Boyle (42 mins), Vinny Corey for R.Wylie (52 mins).

Booked: Donegal - Michael Murphy (39 mins); Monaghan - Colin Walshe (58 mins), Padraig Donaghy (64 mins).

REFEREE: Barry Cassidy (Derry).



Murphy's lasp-gasp equaliser earns Donegal a point

DONEGAL 1-12
MEATH 1-12

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY
 AT SEAN MACCUMHALL PARK

MATCH STATS		
DONEGAL v MEATH		
1	Goals	1
12	Points	12
8	Wides	9
1	45s	0
25	Frees awarded	27
7	Frees scored	4
5	Short efforts	2
1	Black cards	0
2	Yellow cards	1
0	Red cards	0
ATTENDANCE 7,000		

MICHAEL Murphy snatched a last-gasp equaliser for Donegal to preserve their unbeaten League run and deny dogged Meath a win.

The Royals led deep in injury time when Murphy was presented with a chance after Michael Newman encroached to take possession of a throw-up.

Murphy, firmly in the shadows of the bulging stand close to the left touchline on the 20-metre line, lined the crosshairs to near perfection and planted his arrow into the bullseye.

It was the game's final kick, a nerveless moment from the skipper that secured a point for Donegal on a day when they were off colour for long spells.

That said, Donegal could still have won the game as it was they who had the better chances in the second half.

Frank McGlynn goaled in the 28th minute, a cheeky chip or fluky finish depending on your viewpoint, to haul Donegal back into the contest after Meath had stormed from the traps.

Within a minute, Newman rolled home at the other end and it was the Mick O'Dowd's team who led by two points, 1-7 to 1-5, at the changeover, a scoreline Donegal would've been grateful for, given that they'd played second fiddle for long spells.

With the introduction of Neil Gallagher came a more settled Donegal

midfield and with Christy Toye foraging well, the hosts managed to work their way back into it, although Shane O'Rourke and Bryan Menton had been on top for long enough to ensure Meath wouldn't be making it a cake-walk for Jim McGuinness's side.

When Durcan popped a kick-out into Murphy's chest fifteen minutes in, it was the first time in ten attempts that Donegal took primary possession from a kick-out as Meath, with Shane O'Rourke on top, dominated around the middle early on.

In between Donegal's opening two scores, both from Murphy frees, Meath reeled off six of their own to take a surprise command of things.

Andrew Tormey got them off and running when a long punt into the danger zone, bounced on the turf to loop over the bar for a poing. Newman knocked over a free before Damien Carroll cut through to score.

When Donncha Tobin teed up Sean

Curran for an eleventh-minute score there was a danger that this one was running away from Donegal, a notion that heightened when Tormey and Newman - with a splendid free out on the right flank - hit two in the space of a minute.

Finally, Donegal's gears clicked and the hosts hit 1-4 in the final 13 minutes of the opening period.

Murphy tapped over a free, awarded after ref' Pdraig Hughes played a good advantage to allow Rory Kavanagh get a shot in after the St Eunan's man powered through.

Kavanagh was denied by a block from Micky Burke, but the play was pulled back to enable Murphy to convert.

After the McHugh brothers spread the width of the play, the marauding McGlynn played a clever give-and-go with Martin McElhinney to put him in the clear.

The off-position Paddy O'Rourke could only watch in horror as McGlynn's effort, when he appeared to be aiming for a poing, dropped over the Skryne man and into the far corner of the net.

Meath didn't blink and a sweeping team move from the Leinster men concluded with Carroll feeding Newman, who tucked home past Durcan.

Although Dermot Molloy, Toye and Murphy were on target, Donegal were two in arrears at the interval and it was Meath who had the more profitable beginning to the second half.

After Newman registered a free, Durcan's kick-out was into the hands of Brian McMahon, who promptly fired

over.

Donegal shook the sleep from their heads with McFadden and Murphy getting back those two scores before an excellent Toye interception led to a move that gave McFadden the opportunity to make it a one-point gamne; a chance the St Michael's man took.

Donegal lost Ryan McHugh to a black card in the 48th minute, the in-form Kilar man walking for a foul on Graham Reilly.

Toye started and ended a move to get Donegal onto an even keel in the 51st minute, but by that juncture Tir Chonaill really ought to have been in front.

A well-worked passage should have yielded a goal when Toye burst onto the ball and drove at the heart of Meath. Toye squared for McGlynn, who on reflection might have had a go himself.

The 2012 All-Star off-loaded to Murphy, whose shot was off target.

Sixteen minutes from the end Donegal hit the front for only the second time, McFadden keeping his cool from 40metres.

Meath smelt blood, though, and former Under-19 champion sprinter Eamon Wallace and Newman restored the advantage for the visitors.

Murphy restored parity again and, after Graham Reilly looked to have won it another time, it was left to Murphy to save the day.

In those late moments, Donegal could have eked a win. David Walsh, making his return from injury, might well have had a go for goal, but drilled against an upright and young Darach O'Connor saw another come off the woodwork.

The get-out-of-jail card was still live,

though and, with the pressure cooker's heat cranked to its maximum, Murphy rolled the dice as only he can to preserve Donegal's position at the top of the tree ahead of next Sunday's trip to Newry for a date with James McCartan and Down

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Frank McGlynn (1-0); Anthony Thompson, Leo McLoone, Ryan McHugh; Rory Kavanagh, Martin McElhinney; Mark McHugh, Christy Toye (0-2), Odhrán MacNiallais; Colm McFadden (0-3, 2f), Michael Murphy (0-6, 6f), Dermot Molloy (0-1). Subs: Neil Gallagher for Kavanagh (43 mins), Darach O'Connor for Molloy (43 mins), Karl Lacey for R.McHugh (48 mins, black card), David Walsh for MacNiallais (58 mins).

MEATH: Patrick O'Rourke; Mickey Burke, Kevin Reilly, Eoghan Harrington; Sean Curran (0-1), Donal Keogan, Damien Carroll (0 1); Shane O'Rourke (0-1, 1f), Bryan Menton; Andrew Tormey (0-2), Donncha Tobin, Dalton McDonagh; Brian McMahon (0-1), Stephen Bray, Michael Newman (1-4, 3f). Subs: Pdraic Harnan for Tobin (half-time), Graham Reilly (0-1) for Bray (half-time), Seamus Kenny for Curran (52 mins), Eamon Wallace (0-1) for McMahon (52 mins), Mark O'Sullivan for Tormey (62 mins), David Bray for Menton (69 mins).

Black-carded: Donegal - Ryan McHugh (48 mins); Meath - none.

Booked: Donegal - Martin McElhinney (9 mins), Mark McHugh (54 mins); Meath - Kevin Reilly (45 mins).

REFEREE: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh).

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2

Down win puts Donegal into scrap for promotion

DOWN1-09
 DONEGAL0-10

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY
 AT PAIRC ESLER

A FIRST defeat of the League season leaves Donegal firmly in a scrap for promotion heading into the final two series of games in Division 2.

Down were full value for a two-point win at Pairc Esler on a day when Donegal played second fiddle for too long.

Donegal misfired completely, hitting twelve wides and dropping another five efforts into the hands of Down goalkeeper Shane Harrison.

Down led from start to finish and were much more economical with Niall Madine's goal in the 13th minute the key score as James McCartan's side moved to join Donegal and Monaghan on seven points at the top of the table.

There was no late rescue here as there had been when Michael Murphy scored a dramatic, late equaliser to deny Meath in Ballybofey last weekend.

Having been out-foxed by Meath in winning primary possession, Donegal again found themselves chasing the ball from their own kick-outs, with Kevin McKernan the stand-out here, while Mark Poland's direct side caused quite some heartache for the Donegal rearguard.

Madine's goal gave Down a 1-6 to 0-5 lead at half-time and even though Donegal began the second half well a scoreless twenty-four minutes by Jim McGuinness's side, a period where they hit four wides in a row, proved costly.

The writing had been posted early on. With Conor Lavery clipping over the opening score, Down were in a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

They pulled the chips to their side of the table in emphatic fashion with the game's opening goal.

Full-back Brendan McArdle picked up a break in the middle of the park and cut a swathe through the Donegal rearguard. With a firing squad lining up on the edge of the square, it was Madine who tucked home after taking receipt of Donal O'Hare's ball across goal.

As concerning as the narrative was becoming for Donegal, it might well have been worse as Down should have had a penalty in the eighth minute when, after Lavery and Poland combined, the former was hauled down by Paul Durcan.

Somehow, referee Cathal O'Hagan waved away the penalty appeals, with the Donegal netminder a touch fortunate to escape sanction.

Enraged Down did not when Madine slotted home in a busy goalmouth to give the Mourne side the edge and there were worrying signs again for Donegal with Down well on top around the middle third when it came to winning possession.

It was the 18th minute before Dermot Molloy opened Donegal's account, slicing over after Eamon McGee superbly forced a turnover to get the ball in Donegal hands.

But Down's response was instant with midfielder Kevin McKernan sweeping over from out on the left flank.

Michael Murphy, with a majestic effort from the tightest of positions,

and Molloy each had scores cancelled out by Mark Poland and O'Hare (free).

Frees by Murphy and McFadden kept Donegal ticking along, but two quick-fire points by Poland and Madine ensured that Down had a four-point lead as they headed for the sanctuary of the dressing room.

Martin McElhinney slotted over 32 seconds after the re-start and when Leo McLoone showed a neat set of skills that wouldn't have been out of place on a basketball court to reduce the margin to two there was a sense that Donegal had found their way.

However, they were back where they'd started as O'Hare (free) and Conor Garvey restored Down's four-point cushion.

Murphy sailed over a '45, but a barren spell followed with neither side managing to raise a flag for some 21 minutes - 24 in Donegal's case.

Even with a triple substitution, sending Neil Gallagher, Patrick McBrearty and David Walsh into action, Donegal just couldn't get a foothold.

Their attack had been off colour and for the final ten minutes Jim McGuinness sent on young Darach O'Connor - who has a busy few days ahead with the MacLarnon Cup final and a game with the Donegal Under-21s to come - in a bid to salvage a goal.

Lavery posted to give Down a four-point lead again and the game was up for Donegal. A long-range effort by Gallagher and a McFadden free, won by O'Connor, brought Donegal to within striking distance.

However, Lavery took a black card for the team around halfway to cut short McBrearty's intention to make an incision. McLoone and Mark McHugh combined from the free, but when McLoone's floated ball into the square landed in the hands of veteran sub Benny Coulter Down were victors and vanquished Donegal left to ponder a first defeat of the campaign.

Down: Shane Harrison; Daniel McCartan, Brendan McArdle, Owen Costello; Ryan Boyle, Aidan Carr, Conor Garvey (0-1); Peter Turley, Kevin McKernan (0-1); Conor Lavery (0-1), Mark Poland (0-2), Conor Maginn (0-1); Donal O'Hare (0-3, 2f), Niall Madine (1-0), Jerome Johnston. Subs: Ryan Johnston for J. Johnston (56 mins), Benny Coulter for Madine (68 mins), Peter Fitzpatrick for Lavery (black card, 72 mins).

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Anthony Thompson, Leo McLoone (0-1), Frank McGlynn; Rory Kavanagh, Martin McElhinney (0-1); Mark McHugh, Christy Toye, Odhrán MacNiallais; Colm McFadden (0-2, 2f), Michael Murphy (0-3, 1f, 1 '45), Dermot Molloy (0-2). Subs: Neil Gallagher (0-1) for Kavanagh (45 mins), Patrick McBrearty for Molloy (45 mins), David Walsh for MacNiallais (45 mins), Darach O'Connor for Toye (60 mins).

Referee: Cathal O'Hagan (Tyrone)

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2

Donegal relief as Louth fight back causes concern

DONEGAL 1-19
LOUTH 3-07

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY
AT FR TIERNEY PARK

BY the end, there was a strange feeling of relief on an afternoon where Donegal really ought to have had a much bigger margin of victory.

The scoreline and a six-point win merely scratches the surface of the narrative of this, a game Donegal had seemed to have in the bag well before the second half, but one in which they needed a 57th minute goal from David Walsh to enable themselves some breathing space again.

Substitute Walsh netted just after a purple patch from Louth saw them punish Donegal as Paddy Keenan and Brian White netted goals. When White slotted home, barely a minute after midfielder Keenan score his second major of the day, the margin was down to only three points.

Suddenly, there were very real fears of a capitulation, but Walsh fired to the net after good approach work by Ryan McHugh and Dermot Molloy, who passed a late fitness test to start the game.

Donegal were well in command of things until that period where Louth blasted away the deficit.

It won't have been the concession so much as the manner of them that will have concerned Jim McGuinness and company.

When White, who ended the day with 1-3, slotted over a free in the 54th minute, Donegal led handsomely 0-16

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v LOUTH

1	Goals	3
19	Points	7
6	Wides	10
0	45s	3
21	Frees awarded	28
8	Frees scored	4
4	Short efforts	2
0	Black cards	2
2	Yellow cards	2
0	Red cards	0

ATTENDANCE 3,600

to 1-4.

However, Paul Durcan's subsequent kick-out was punted into the hands of Adrian Reid and after he made the telling incision into Donegal's skin, it was Keenan who applied the finishing touch.

Rocked already, Donegal could hardly believe what was happening when White found himself with a chance and he made no mistake as the Wee County side took full advantage of the gaping holes in the Tir Chonaill rearguard.

Just when it seemed as if an upset of epic proportions was on the cards, Walsh stepped up to calm the nerves. His finish was crisp and decisive, it's meaning particularly important to the end game of not just this but perhaps the final placings in a League where the teams head for the final day of action with little to separate them.

Colm McFadden took his tally to seven points with a pair of late scores

and Michael Murphy added a brilliant effort, although a trio from Shane Lennon kept the Louth tally ticking.

And there was time for them to punch another notch in Donegal's cloth, as Declan Byrne got in for another goal chance, but his goal-bound shot was bravely blocked by Mark McHugh.

The day had started off routinely for Donegal, who were without the injured Frank McGlynn, while Martin McElhinney was deemed unfit to start having reported feeling ill overnight.

Needing a win to bolster their promotion hopes after disappointing results against Meath and Down, Donegal got off to almost the perfect start.

McFadden and Declan Walsh posted Donegal into an early lead before Brian White fired over a Louth free, for what was their only score in the opening 32 minutes.

As inspired as Donegal might have been, Louth were every bit as insipid and the visitors had the look of a side that had already given up the ghost in terms of survival for they were an outfit that

Donegal reeled off eleven points in a row as the afternoon seemed to be evolving into a procession.

McFadden, Murphy, Molloy and Toye were among the scorers, while the ever-efficient Anthony Thompson got in on the act and the excellent Rory Kavanagh notched a pair of fine scores to cap an influential display at centerfield.

Just before half-time, the Louth supporters managed to get something cheer when the Wee County bagged a

goal, though it was one brought about not by their own design, but a moment that Donegal will look back on with regret.

Declan Byrne's shot from distance dropped on the edge of the square. Shane Lennon contested the aerial duel with Paul Durcan and when the Donegal 'keeper could only palm the ball down midfielder Paddy Keenan riffled to the net.

By that stage, though, the game had seemed long gone as a contest. Certainly, there were few around Ballyshannon who could have foretold the sequence of events in what was something of a mad-cap second half.

Louth had lost both Dessie Finnegan and Colm Judge to black cards and looked for a time as if they were set to throw in the towel, but they got back into it and ensured there were no early-leavers as they made for a difficult ending for the hosts.

Donegal had began the second half brightly with Toye, Murphy and McFadden clipping them eleven in front, only for events to take a strange turn and leave the fingernails a little shorter.

Although there were positives in the twenty scores posted and the performances of the likes of Kavanagh, Thompson, Toye and McFadden, the manner in which the goals were leaked is a point of concern, one that McGuinness insisted will be top of his list this week.

He said: "We will have to look at the goals and how they originated. They could have been prevented."

Still, his side have destiny in their palms and this result inches them closer to Division 2, but Louth have now fall-

en down the trapdoor and will play in Division 3 next year.

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Declan Walsh (0-1); Leo McLoone, Anthony Thompson (0-1); Rory Kavanagh (0-2), Christy Toye (0-3); Mark McHugh, Dermot Molloy (0-1), Odhrán MacNiallais; Colm McFadden (0-7, 5f), Michael Murphy (0-4, 3f), Patrick McBrearty. Subs: Ryan McHugh for Lacey (half-time), David Walsh (1-0) for McBrearty (53 mins), Gary McFadden for Kavanagh (68 mins), Luke Keaney for Thompson (70 mins).

LOUTH: Neil Gallagher; Padraig Rath, Dessie Finnegan, John O'Brien; Gary O'Hare, Derek Crilly, Adrian Reid; Paddy Keenan (2-0), Brian Donnelly; Patrick Reilly, Brian White (1-3, 2f, 1'45), Stephen Campbell; Andy McDonnell, Eoin O'Connor, Shane Lennon (0-3, 2f).

Subs: Darren O'Hanlon for Finnegan (4 mins, black card), Colm Judge for Campbell (22 mins), Bevan Duffy (0-1) for O'Connor (30 mins, black card), Declan Byrne for Judge (31 mins), Liam Shevlin for Reilly (49 mins), Darren Clarke for Donnelly (64 mins).

Black carded: Louth - Dessie Finnegan (4 mins), Colm Judge (30 mins).
Louth - Colm Judge (24 mins), Darren O'Hanlon (54 mins).

REFEREE: Martin Higgins (Fermanagh).

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2

Donegal are back dining at the top table

ARMAGH 1-08
 DONEGAL 2-10

BY CHRIS MCNULTY
 AT THE ATHLETIC GROUNDS

DONEGAL are back on the top rung again after two Michael Murphy goals saw them defeat Armagh at the Athletic Grounds.

Murphy netted in either half to confirm their passage back into

Division One, with a Division Two final against Monaghan to come in

three weeks' time for

Jim McGuinness's side. For Armagh, the connotations of this result bring all sorts of problems home to roost, not least that they are heading for Division Three after a performance here that was well beneath what we'd come to expect from men wearing those orange shirts.

Donegal, with Rory Kavanagh once again outstanding in the middle of the park, didn't quite have it all their own way, but there was a clear distinction between the team taking the elevator to Division 1 and that headed below the watermark.

Aside from Jamie Clarke, who scored 1-1, Armagh didn't have an awful lot to trouble Donegal, although they were well in the game for the most part.

Donegal weren't at their fluent best, but with Kavanagh immense and with Karl Lacey giving his best performance in a Donegal shirt since the 2012 All-Ire-

land final, Donegal had built up an early lead that would stand them in good stead throughout the contest.

Murphy netted from a penalty in the 16th minute, but Clarke forced home just two minutes later. Donegal had the upper hand, 1-5 to 1-3, at half-time and when Murphy powered to the net just four minutes into the second half.

Donegal knew that avoiding defeat would ensure there was no need for the sums to be totted as regards their placings, but they were in no mood to hand around and they quickly asserted their mark on things.

Frank McGlynn returned from an injury to take the place of Declan Walsh again, while Neil Gallagher was restored to the midfield, with the big Glenswilly man included in the void left by a hamstring injury sustained by Mark McHugh in the week, for what was his first start of the League.

It was a landmark day for Colm McFadden, who was making his 148th appearance for the county, going out on his own in second in Donegal's all-time appearances list, the St Michael's man now only eleven games off Brian Roper's record of 159. McFadden's kicking was imperious again, hitting five points in all, two of them from frees in the opening six minutes.

Those placed balls by McFadden bookended a brace from Kavanagh, whose first was a well-worked score. Murphy fetched a long ball by Anthony Thompson and off-loaded for the in-rushing Kavanagh to point. A fabulous point by the St Eunan's man, 30 metres out and from a position not too far off

the sideline, he arched over the black spot.

Kyle Carragher and Aaron Kernan got Armagh off the mark, but Donegal took a big step when they were awarded a penalty after McFadden was hauled down by Finian Moriarty. Murphy stepped forth and shot, right-footed, across himself into the bottom right-hand corner of Philip McEvoy's net.

However, Armagh responded just two minutes later. Clarke had been a peripheral figure up until then, but with his first purposeful touch of the ball the Crossmaglen ace blasted past Durcan after being set up by Kevin Dyas, who collected Kyle Carragher's long ball in.

A magnificent Clarke point announced Armagh's arrival into the contest, but McFadden curled over a free won by Lacey to give Donegal a two-point lead at the break.

Armagh came alive after Clarke signalled their intent. Donegal were thankful for Paul Durcan denying Stefan Campbell with a brilliant save after he was put in the clear by a clever pass by Clarke. Durcan narrowed the angles and made a strong save while the rebound was taken off Campbell's instep by Thompson.

As things stood at half-time, Armagh could feel relegation's cold finger tapping on their shoulders. Word filtered through that they state of play had them joining neighbours Louth in bidding Division 2 farewell.

Beforehand, Paul Grimley, their manager, could be heard firing his side up during the warm-up, talking to them about the importance of surviving in Di-

vision Two. Grimley went for the experienced heads. The old dogs for the hard road got the nod with Aaron Kernan in to make his first League start of the year, and the likes of Moriarty and Charlie Vernon called into combat.

Armagh started Gary McCooney on Murphy, but it quickly became apparent that he was in trouble and Vernon was moved in to shadow the Glenswilly giant. The pair had a good, old-fashioned tussle for the duration.

Tempers boiled when Armagh felt they should have been awarded a penalty on the half-hour mark as Eamon McGee appeared to have made a foot block to save a goal-bound shot by Campbell. When Fergal Kelly, the referee, shook his head at their appeals, the Longford official found his credit rating falling rapidly. Kieran McGeeney, Paul Grimley's right-hand man, let his feelings be known to the official.

Donegal's second goal was route one at its best, with two kicks taking the ball right into the edge of the square for

Michael Murphy to do as he does. After Tony Kernan scored a '45 for Armagh to bring them to within a point, Durcan's kick-out was plucked from the sky by the excellent Kavanagh, who drove direct and precisely into Murphy. After getting goal-side of Vernon, Murphy smashed past McEvoy.

Murphy was the provider again for a lovely score by Kavanagh, selling a dummy that had two Armagh men swinging flailing arms in the slipstream of the Donegal man.

Donegal introduced Patrick McBrearty and the Under-21 captain was on the mark with two wonder scores. McBrearty is pushing hard to

win his place back in the starting XV again and his twenty minutes here will have done no harm. In the 56th minute, he reminded the attendance of his talents, when he delightfully hit the target from distance and showed it was no fluke ten minutes later after being set up by the rampaging Neil McGee.

The fitting cherry was placed by McFadden, from a 45-metre effort from play that put the nail in it.

Armagh had valiantly attempted to stay in touch, but Donegal just had too much, with McFadden's point clinching a five-point win.

For the second time in three years Donegal have relegated Armagh, having sent them to Division 2 on the last day of the League season in 2012. That will surely have tasted sweet in many corners of Tir Chonaill, but equally as luscious is the prospect of Donegal's return to both Croke Park and Division One.

ARMAGH: Philip McEvoy; Michael Murray, Gary McCooney (0-1), Andy Mallon; Aaron Kernan (0-1), Charlie Vernon, Finian Moriarty; Stephen Harold, Kieran Toner; Stephen Campbell, Kevin Dyas, Eugene McVerry; Jamie Clarke (1-1), Tony Kernan (0-3, 2f, 1'45), Kyle Carragher (0-1).
Subs: Aaron Findon for A.Kernan (49mins), Ethan Rafferty for Dyas (52 mins), Rory Grugan for McCooney (54 mins), Robbie Tasker (0-1) for Clarke (67 mins).

DONEGAL: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey; Frank McGlynn, Leo McLoone, Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh (0-3), Neil Gallagher; Martin McElhinney, Christy Toyne, Odhrán MacNiallais; Colm McFadden (0-5, 4f), Michael Murphy (2-0, 1pen), Dermot Molloy.
Subs: Patrick McBrearty (0-2) for Gallagher (49 mins), David Walsh for Toyne (56 mins), Ryan McHugh for Molloy (56 mins), Hugh McFadden for McElhinney (64 mins), Declan Walsh for David Walsh (72 mins, black card)

REFEREE: Fergal Kelly (Longford).

GAA - ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2 FINAL

Emphatic win for Monaghan

DONEGAL1-10
MONAGHAN1-16

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY AT CROKE PARK
PHOTOS BY DONNA MCBRIDE

THE most concerning aspect about this game was that it showed that last year's Ulster final was not a one-off.

Monaghan are the deserving Division 2 champions and Malachy O'Rourke's team was in no way flattered by their six-point winning margin of a game that leaves Donegal with some deep concerns a month out from their Ulster Championship opener in Derry.

In many ways this was a more emphatic win for Monaghan than they'd enjoyed on that sweltering Sunday in Clones last July. Although Donegal levelled the game through a Michael Murphy penalty in the 50th minute, they managed only two more points over the final twenty minutes.

It was a performance that Jim McGuinness considered afterwards to have been his side's 'worst performance of the year'. Donegal were greatly inhibited when Rory Kavanagh was sent off in the 41st minute. Kavanagh was given a straight red card for his part in a peculiar incident with Monaghan's Darren Hughes. Kavanagh lost a boot that was kicked away by Hughes and once Kavanagh got it into his hand he put it to the groin of the Monaghan player, whose theatrical reaction didn't aid Kavanagh's cause any.

A player of Kavanagh's experience might be expected to refrain from engaging in such incidents and it was disappointing especially given that it leaves Donegal devoid of the in-form St Eunan's man for the Derry clash.

"It's something we could have done without. He has lost his disci-

pline," McGuinness observed afterwards.

Murphy restored parity for Donegal when he thumped home a penalty, awarded by referee David Gough following a consultation with his umpires. Colin Walshe was deemed to have committed a foul on Ryan McHugh and, although the replays showed the Donegal man to have been outside the area the referee's outstretched arms handed Murphy a chance.

The captain obliged with the finish, but a man down Donegal were always facing an uphill task. Donegal might've had the stiff breeze driving at their back for the second half, but the wind was in Monaghan's sails.

Conor McManus drilled over a super point to put Monaghan ahead and the Farney men were on their way to a second League title in as many years when Kieran Hughes palmed past Paul Durcan following a sweeping and ruthless move that exposed the chink in Donegal's armour made by Kavanagh's sending off. Monaghan surged forward with intent and when Hughes converted the blue and white ribbons could be knotted.

They surged through in a manner reminiscent of the Ulster final last year when they stunned then reigning Ulster and All-Ireland kings Donegal.

Dick Clerkin, so effective after coming on for the injured Eoin Lennon, drove over to open up a four-point lead while the excellent Fintan Kelly teed up Chris McGuinness and his clever shimmy set him up for a fine score. Corner-back Kelly got in on the act himself while captain McManus placed the cherry with Donegal's groans lifted only briefly by consolation scores by Murphy and Colm McFadden, who was black carded in added time.

Match Stats

Donegal/Monaghan

Goals 1/1
Points 10/16
Wides 6/10
45s 0/1
Frees awarded 19/13
Frees scored 7/1
Short efforts 7/2
Black cards 0/2
Yellow cards 3/1
Red cards 1/0
Black carded: Donegal - none;
Monaghan - Colin Walshe (54 mins),
Darren Hughes (73 mins).
Booked: Donegal - Rory Kavanagh
(36 mins), Neil McGee (41 mins), Eamon McGee (65 mins); Monaghan -
Chris McGuinness (59 mins).
Sent off: Donegal - Rory Kavanagh
(41 mins); Monaghan - none.

Donegal lined out with ten of the starters from the 2012 All-Ireland final and when Neil Gallagher and Mark McHugh were thrown in on 28 minutes at a time when Monaghan were well on top that figure was up to the dozen.

Yet, Monaghan were ahead 0-10 to 0-7 at the interval and Donegal were thankful that Kieran Hughes had to settle for a point on the half-hour that really should have been a goal, the wing-forward driving over after getting away from Eamon McGee to set up the chance. From distance, Monaghan were devastating in the first half, making good use of the wind to take a grip of it.

Patrick McBrearty and McFadden (free) started the ball rolling for Donegal, who led again when McFadden tapped over a 13th minute free after 'keeper Rory Beggan ('45) and

Darren Hughes, with the aid of Hawkeye, levelled it up.

Hughes and Paul Finlay steered Monaghan ahead and it wasn't long before they widened the gap with McManus, Paudie McKenna and Dessie Mone, with a splendid finish after side-stepping two Donegal players, put them 0-7 to 0-3 in front.

Donegal did get back into it, though, as Murphy drilled over after fetching above Vinny Corey in a move that echoed his goal in the same Hill 16 net from the All-Ireland final.

Murphy won a subsequent free off Corey and converted it to keep Donegal in check, but McKenna, Kieran Hughes and Finlay, with another long-range score, ensured that Monaghan were well on top of it at the changeover, where Donegal had hope thanks to Murphy and McFadden frees.

Gallagher and McHugh were called for with Donegal struggling at times. Luke Keane, who was in for the injured Leo McLoone, had to make a good saving tackle to deny Kieran Hughes in the eighth minute, recovering well from his own mis-

take to concede a '45.

Odrán MacNiallais brought Donegal to within two at the outset of part two.

When Kavanagh looked up and saw red, Donegal's twine began to unravel and the hope now must be that they can stop the spool, with only four weeks until their swords clang against those of Derry in Celtic Park.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Donegal have plenty to ponder in the next month before they face Derry at Celtic Park on May 25th in the Ulster SFC.

Donegal: Paul Durcan; Eamon McGee, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey, Frank McGlynn, Luke Keane, Anthony Thompson; Christy Toye, Ryan McHugh, Odrán MacNiallais (0-1); Colm McFadden (0-4, 3f), Michael Murphy (1-4, 1-0pen, 3f), Patrick McBrearty (0-1). Subs: Neil Gallagher for McElhinney (28 mins), Mark McHugh for Toye (28 mins), Conor Classon for MacNiallais (46 mins),

Darach O'Connor for R McHugh (59 mins), Declan Walsh for Keane (66 mins), Dermot Molloy for McFadden (black card, 68 mins).

Monaghan: Rory Beggan (0-1, 1 '45); Kieran Duffy, Drew Wylie, Fintan Kelly (0-1); Dessie Mone (0-1), Vinny Corey, Colin Walshe; Owen Lennon, Paul Finlay (0-3, 1f); Kieran Hughes (0-1), Stephen Gollogly, Darren Hughes (0-2); Dermot Malone, Paudie McKenna (0-2), Conor McManus (0-3). Subs: Dick Clerkin (0-1) for Lennon (38 mins), Ryan Wylie for Walshe (black card, 54 mins), Chris McGuinness (0-1) for Gollogly (57 mins), Padraig Donaghy for Malone (68 mins), Jack McCarron for Finlay (72 mins), Karl O'Connell for D.Hughes (black card, 73 mins).

Referee: David Gough (Meath)

TERRACE TALK

With four weeks to go until they begin their Ulster Championship crusade Donegal have more questions than answers at this stage and there are plenty of areas of concern before they head for the bear pit that is Celtic Park.