

2016

Team Manager: Rory Gallagher

Dr. McKenna Cup

SECTION A: Antrim; Derry; Tyrone; Queen's University.

SECTION B: Donegal; Fermanagh; Down; St Mary's College.

SECTION C: Cavan; Armagh; Monaghan; University of Ulster, Jordanstown

1	3 Jan	Ballybofey	Donegal	1-11	Down	0-11
2	10 Jan	Letterkenny	Donegal	0-8	St. Mary's	2-6
3	15 Jan	Brewster Park	Fermanagh	0-12	Donegal	0-8
	23 Jan Final	Athletics Ground	Tyrone	1-22	Derry	1-17

Senior Football Championship

Preliminary Round

	15 May	Brewester Park	Fermanagh	1-12	Antrim	0-9
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Quarter Finals

	22 May	Celtic Park	Derry	0-12	Tyrone	3-14
	29 May	Kingspan Breffni Park,	Cavan	2-16	Armagh	0-14
	5 June	St Tiernach's Park,	Monaghan	2-22	Down	0-9
4	12 June	McCumhaill Park	Donegal	2-12	Fermanagh	1-11

Semi-finals

	19 June	Clones	Tyrone	0-16	Cavan	3-7
	3 July	Clones	Tyrone	5-18	Cavan	2-17
5	25 June	Kingsspan Breffni Park	Monaghan	0-14	Donegal,	1-11
6	2 July	Kingsspan Breffni Park	Donegal,	0-17	Monaghan	2-10

Ulster Final

7	17 July	Clones	Donegal	0-11	Tyrone	0-13
8	30 July	Croke Park	Donegal	0-21	Cork	1-15
9	6 August	Croke Park	Dublin	1-15	Donegal	1-10

All Ireland Semi-finals

	21 August	Croke Park	Mayo	2-13	Tipperary	0-14
	28 August	Croke Park	Dublin	0-22	Kerry	2-14

All Ireland Final

	18 September	Croke Park	Dublin	2-9	Mayo	0-15
	1 October	Croke Park	Dublin	1-15	Mayo	1-14

2016 - ALLIANZ Football League Division 1

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
Dublin	7	7	0	0	8-89	4-73	28	14*
Roscommon	7	4	0	3	9-98	8-77	24	8*
Kerry	7	5	0	2	5-109	5-77	32	8*
Donegal	7	3	0	4	8-84	6-78	12	6*
Mayo	7	3	0	4	5-86	7-89	-9	6
Monaghan	7	3	0	4	6-83	7-91	-17	6
Cork	7	3	0	4	9-89	9-105	-16	6+
Down	7	0	0	7	2-60	6-108	-60	0+

*Semi-finalist

+Relegated

10	30.01.2016	Down 0-7 Donegal 3-15	Dublin 2-14 Kerry 0-14
	31.01.2016	Cork 1-18 Mayo 0-12	Roscommon 1-9 Monaghan 2-10
	06.02.2016	Mayo 0-7 Dublin 0-9	
11	07.02.2016	Donegal 2-14 Cork 1-7	Kerry 1-10 Roscommon 0-14 Monaghan 0-13 Down 0-11
	27.02.2016	Dublin 1-14 Monaghan 0-16	
12	28.02.2016	Donegal 1-14 Mayo 1-12	Cork 3-10 Roscommon 4-25 Down 0-6 Kerry 0-22
	05.03.2016	Dublin 2-14 Cork 2-10	
13	06.03.2016	Kerry 1-13 Donegal 1-8	Roscommon 1-12 Down 0-6 Monaghan 1-12 Mayo 2-11
	12.03.2016	Down 1-7 Dublin 1-15	
14	13.03.2016	Donegal 0-17 Roscommon 1-19	Cork 1-20 Monaghan 1-13 Mayo 0-14 Kerry 2-13
15	26.03.2016	Dublin 1-10 Donegal 0-7	
	27.03.2016	Cork 0-12 Down 0-7	Monaghan 1-9 Kerry 1-17 Roscommon 1-7 Mayo 1-11
16	03.04.2016	Monaghan 1-10 Donegal 1-09	Kerry 0-20 Cork 1-12 Mayo 1-19 Down 1-16
		Roscommon 1-12 Dublin 1-13	
17	09/10.04.2016	Dublin 1-20 Donegal 0-13	Kerry 3-15 Roscommon 0-14
	24.04.2016	Division 1 Final: Dublin 2-18 Kerry 0-13	

YOUNG GUNS POWER DONEGAL TO EASY VICTORY

Peter Campbell
in Ballybofey



Donegal got the New Year off to a good start with a comfortable win over Down in MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey in the first game in the Dr. McKenna Cup.

Donegal 1-11
Down 0-11

The game was the 100th game for Donegal captain, Michael Murphy, who marked his introduction in the second half with one of his trademark points, and he was also almost in for a goal, but slipped at the vital moment.

Donegal led by 1-3 to 0-4 at half-time after a stop-start first half. Donegal started well with Frank McGlynn finding the Down net inside 68 seconds.

McGlynn, who was captain for the day, found himself all alone in front of the Down goal and took full advantage of a great pass from Odhran MacNiallais before chipping Down 'keeper Stephen Kane for a classic score.

The score brought back memories of McGlynn's great goal against Down in the Ulster final of 2012. His deployment at centre half-forward is something new this year. He had the No. 11 jersey in a recent challenge game against Sligo also and when asked about that afterwards, manager Rory Gallagher, said it was something different that they wanted to try.

Gallagher's experimentation was well managed with a good mix of experience and young players in each line.

Cathal Doyle had Down's first score on three minutes but Donegal were dominating and two good points from one of the six starting Donegal debutants, Ciaran Thompson, had Donegal four points clear.

They should have been further ahead as Eoghan Ban Gallagher blazed wide after a lovely flick from Leo McLoone put him clean through on 15 minutes.

Thereafter Donegal seemed to lose their way and by the 23rd minute Down were back within a point with three points from Gareth Johnston, Arthur McConville (free) and Ryan Mallon.

There was just one more score from then to the half-time whistle, Martin O'Reilly pointing a free on 29 minutes.

It was an opening half that saw 31 frees, 20 to Down while the teams

also shared 15 wides, Down having eight to Donegal's seven.

The second half was a much more open affair. Gareth Johnston was almost in for a Down goal on 15 seconds, but blazed over and the corner forward was wide with two further efforts in the following minute.

Points from Martin O'Reilly and Hugh McFadden was the perfect response and by the 46th minute, Ciaran Thompson and Caolan Ward had opened the gap to 1-7 to 0-6. Donegal's Jack O'Brien, saw a thunderbolt come back off the crossbar moments later with 'keeper Stephen Kane well beaten, after some good approach work. Indeed, from the rebound Odhran MacNiallais had a half chance, but saw his effort blocked.

There was an unusual cameo with a corner back from both sides, Ryan Boyle and Paddy McGrath, getting on the scoreboard within a minute of each other. McGrath's effort was his first ever score for the county.

Sean Dornan had a point for Down before the biggest cheer of the day from the 2,500 crowd greeted Michael Murphy's introduction on 54 minutes and he had a point on the board three minutes after his introduction. It helped Donegal into a 1-10 to 0-8 lead and although Down pulled the margin back to three, the final result was never really in

doubt.

Darragh O'Hanlon and Barry O'Hagan had Down points before Frank McGlynn and Peter Turley exchanged the final points in the 65th and 66th minutes.

There was almost a second point from Paddy McGrath at the death as he powered through but his effort was off target.

Down manager, Eamonn Burns, will have plenty to be cheerful about despite the result as he started with four players making their senior inter-county debut.

The game proved a good one for the Donegal debutants. Danny Rodgers was a late call up to keep goal after Mark Anthony McGinley pulled up in the warm-up. Rodgers had one dodgy moment when he came along way to punch but overall had a good game.

Jack O'Brien, Caolan Ward, Ciaran Thompson, Michael Carroll and Stephen McBrearty have plenty of reason to be happy with the outing. Thompson, with three points from play, was given the man of the match award, while O'Brien and Ward showed up really well in defence.

There was plenty of energy about the Donegal performance, especially in the second half with Paddy McGrath especially lively.

Donegal now play St. Mary's on Sunday next in O'Donnell Park before their final game in the group away to Fermanagh on Wednesday, 13th. After this win, they will fancy their chances of qualifying for the semi-final as group winners.

MATCH FACTS

Donegal: D Rodgers; J O'Brien, E Doherty, P McGrath (0-1); M O'Reilly (0-2,2f), C Ward (0-1), E Ban Gallagher; H McFadden (0-1), C Thompson (0-3); M Carroll, F McGlynn (1-1), S McBrearty; O MacNiallais (0-1), L McLoone, E McHugh. Subs., M Murphy (0-1) for Carroll 54; C Morrison for McHugh 69.

Down: S Kane; M McGee, C McGovern, R Boyle (0-1); R Mallon (0-1), A Carr; D O'Hanlon (0-2,2f); P Turley (0-1), C Doyle (0-1); J McDermott, C Mooney, J Murphy; G Johnston (0-2), A McConville (0-1,f), S Dornan (0-1). Subs., D Turley for McDermott 44; B O'Hagan (0-1) for Mallon; M McCay for McConville; C Harrison for Dornan, all 59; P McEldowney for Turley 66.

Frees: Donegal 20 (11 in first half). Down 29 (20)

Wides: Donegal 10 (7). Down 13 (8)

Yellow Cards: Donegal 0. Down 2G Johnston, JMurphy

Referee: Martin McNally (Monaghan)

Man of the Match

The award went to Ciaran Thompson - an incredible debut with three points from play. There were excellent games also from Paddy McGrath, Frank McGlynn, Jack O'Brien, Caolan Ward and Eoghan Ban Gallagher.

Disappointing Donegal go down to St. Mary's College

Diarmaid Doherty
in Letterkenny



Donegal's prospects of qualifying for the semi-finals of the Dr. McKenna Cup suffered a major setback on Sunday with this defeat to St. Mary's College in Letterkenny.

Donegal 0-8 St. Mary's College 2-6

On a day when a win would have put them in pole position in the group, this defeat means Donegal might not even qualify if they were to win their final match away to Fermanagh on Wednesday night.

Their performance against the students of St. Mary's did little to impress. But they still looked the better side throughout and carried the greater threat coming forward.

However, eight points over 70+ minutes was a poor return for Rory Gallagher's men.

Indeed they only had three different scorers with man-of-the-match Odhran MacNiallais scoring all but two of his team's total.

The Gaioth Dobhair man put in a fine display, but his return could have been better. He was guilty of

two-missed goal chances, one in each half. Had either opportunity been taken, Donegal would surely have gone on to win.

In a dour struggle, the sides were level at half time, Donegal 0-5, St. Mary's 1-2. The entertainment didn't really improve in the second half, but there were a couple of big moments, not least, the sending off of Donegal's Paddy McGrath on 50 minutes.

But even with a man less, Donegal still looked the more likely and going into the final five minutes, MacNiallais kicked them 0-8 to 1-4 in front.

However, from the kick-out, St. Mary's struck back with a brilliantly worked goal - substitute, Ryan Johnston finishing a wonderful move with a great goal.

Suddenly, St. Mary's were two points to the good and they closed out with two more points to win by four.

On the back of their opening day win against Down, Donegal were fancied to be too strong for St. Mary's who had lost out to Fermanagh in mid-week.

Rory Gallagher gave Stephen McMenamin his debut at half back and the Red Hughs man fitted in well as Donegal started brightly.

Playing with Leo McLoone at full forward in the early stages, Donegal worked a couple of decent early openings. MacNiallais opened their account six minutes in with a well

taken score.

But almost immediately, St. Mary's hit back with the game's opening goal. Ciaran MacIomhar worked the opening out on the left and his ball found Jack Grogan who got just enough room to fire his shot in past Danny Rodgers.

Donegal's response was good. Michael Carroll pointed from play and his clubmate MacNiallais guided over a glorious point on the wind from the stand-side to level the game.

Donegal however, would then score just a single point over the next 25 minutes. They enjoyed plenty of possession, but they frustrated the home crowd with their reluctance to take shots on goal and a failure to produce a killer pass when the need arose.

Aidan McGarrity's point from play on 13 minutes put St. Mary's in front but MacNiallais' free on 22 levelled the game again.

Grogan knocked over a long range point for St. Mary's before MacNiallais, two minutes into injury time, sent the sides in level with another well taken score.

Donegal rang the changes at half time and introduced Michael Murphy, Stephen McBrearty and Neil McGee and the team did look to have a better balance.

But despite an early point from Eoin McHugh, Donegal continued to struggle for scores and a Ryan Johnston point, just seconds after his in-

roduction, levelled the game yet again.

Then followed Paddy McGrath's dismissal after a mellee involving several players from both sides. The Ardara man was shown a yellow and red card while Neil McGee and Grogan were also booked.

MacNiallais and Johnston exchanged scores before a free from MacNiallais on 65 minutes put his team 0-8 to 1-4 in front. However, Johnston then struck for what proved the winning goal and the Students went on to claim what was an unexpected victory.

Donegal: Danny Rodgers; Jack O'Brien, Eamonn Doherty, Paddy McGrath; Frank McGlynn, Caolan Ward, Stephen McMenamin; Hugh McFadden, Odhran MacNiallais (0-6, 3f); Michael Carroll (0-1), Ciaran Thompson, Eoghan Ban Gallagher; Leo McLoone, Martin O'Reilly, Eoin McHugh (0-1). Subs: Michael Murphy for McFadden, Neil McGee for Doherty, Stephen McBrearty for O'Brien (all half time), Cillian Morrison for Carroll (66).

St. Mary's College: Rory Burns; Aaron McKay, Patrick McAleer; Ciaran McCooey; Kevin McKernan, Niall McPartland, Harry Loughran; Peter Carragher, Daniel McBride; Conor Meyler, Conall McCann (0-1), Aidan McGarrity (0-1); Cikaran MacIomhar, Jack Grogan (1-1), Aidan Nugent. Subs: Patrick McBride (0-1) for Meyler, Matthew Fitzpatrick for Nugent (42), Ryan Johnston (1-2) for MacIomhar (43), Darragh Kavanagh for Grogan, Ciaran Corrigan for McCooey (56, black card).

Referee: Dan Mullan (Derry)

MATCH FACTS

Frees: Donegal 19 (13 in first half).
St. Mary's College 21 (13)

Wides: Donegal 9 (3).
St. Mary's College 5 (2)

Yellow Cards: Donegal 4, J. O'Brien, H McFadden, N McGee, P McGrath
St. Mary's College 3, C Meyler, J Grogan, P McBride

Red Cards: Donegal 1, P McGrath

Referee: Dan Mullan (Derry)

GAA – DR MCKENNA CUP SECTION B

Defeat in Fermanagh sees Donegal out of McKenna Cup

FERMANAGH 0-12
 DONEGAL 0-08

BY RYAN FERRY

DONEGAL's McKenna Cup campaign came to a conclusion on Wednesday night when they were defeated by a much more cohesive Fermanagh side in Brewster Park.

Rory Gallagher's team went into the game knowing that a five-point win would take them through to the semi-finals, but the Erne county were not in a welcoming mood and it was evident from early on that Donegal were in for a tough encounter.

The visitors controlled much of the play in the first half, but similar to their defeat to St Mary's College last Sunday, they struggled to break down a well-organised defence.

The sides were level at the break, but Fermanagh were fitter and sharper and they dominated the midfield in the second period.

Donegal were second-best throughout the field and Fermanagh ran out comfortable winners thanks to some excellent free-taking from Sean Quigley.

Gallagher handed starts to Michael Murphy and Neil McGee as he tried to build up their fitness, while Caolan McGonagle made his senior debut after impressing for his college team in two games over the last fortnight.

Fermanagh registered the first score of the match in the third minute, when Quigley's superb pass found Declan McCusker, and he passed to his captain Eoin Donnelly, who fisted over.

Donegal responded well with Odhrán MacNiallais scoring a rare point with his right foot, before Ciaran Thompson curled over in the ninth minute.

The Donegal attack misfired against St Mary's and it struggled again early in the match, with the forward line guilty of a lot of unforced errors.

Donegal were doing well in defence but that didn't stop Ciaran Flaherty scoring a fine point with the outside of his right foot, before Quigley landed an exquisite sideline ball.

Peter McGrath's Fermanagh were fit and strong, and they were intent on imposing their physicality on Donegal.

Despite this, Gallagher's men managed to score the next three points with MacNiallais scoring a brace, before Martin O'Reilly popped over after a good team move involving Michael Murphy and Leo McLoone.

It looked like Donegal were starting to get into their rhythm, but they dropped off in the closing minutes of the first half and Declan McCusker and Quigley (free) registered points to level the proceedings at the interval.

Gallagher re-jigged his team at half-time with McLoone and Ciaran Thompson replaced. Martin McElhinney was introduced for his first appearance of the year, while Gaoth Dobhair clubman Kieran Gillespie was given his senior bow.

The manager made a few tactical adjustments, but his team were lucky not to concede a goal in the 41st minute when Donnelly blazed a shot over the bar.

O'Reilly was moved to full-forward in the second half and he showed well in front of his marker. He won a free in the 43rd minute which Murphy slotted over.

Donegal then edged ahead when Gillespie powered through to tap over, however McElhinney was soon black-carded, and Donegal lost their way in the middle sector.

Fermanagh were sweeping up all the breaks and Donegal had trouble dealing with their powerful runners.

They were forced to foul and Quigley notched two long-range frees to push his team in front.

James McMahon also drove forward to fist over, but MacNiallais did reply with a free to keep Donegal in touch.

However, Fermanagh have been back training earlier than their opponents and their fitness told in the final ten minutes.

Paul McCusker dissected the posts after receiving a pass from Donnelly, and Pat Cadden followed up with another point.

Donegal launched a few balls in towards the edge of the square late on, but Fermanagh were not prepared to budge, and Quigley rounded off their victory with a free in the 69th minute.

Gallagher's men now have two weeks to get up to speed ahead of their NFL opener against Down, while Fermanagh advance to a semi-final clash with Tyrone, and they will be looking to make steady progress over the spring months.

If the Erne county get over Antrim

in the Preliminary Round of the Ulster Championship, they will come to MacCumhail Park for the quarter-final, and McGrath will be aware that they won't be able to dictate affairs as they did on Wednesday night.

Referee: Noel Mooney (Cavan).

Fermanagh: Chris Snow; Michael Jones, Aidan Breen, Paddy McGovern; Declan McCusker (0-1), James McMahon (0-1), Damian Kelly; Eoin Donnelly (0-2), Conall Jones; Barry Mulrone, Ciaran Flaherty (0-1), Paul McCusker (0-1); Ryan Hanna, Sean Quigley (0-5, 4fs, 1 sideline), Tomas Corrigan. Subs: Niall Cassidy for Kelly (half-time), Daniel Teague for Corrigan (50 mins), Pat Cadden (0-1) for Hanna (57 mins), Eoin McManus for Jones (65 mins).

Donegal: Peter Boyle; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Eamonn Doherty; Eoghan 'Ban' Gallagher, Caolan Ward, Martin O'Reilly (0-1); Caolan McGonagle, Michael Murphy (0-1, 1f), Stephen McBrearty, Hugh McFadden, Ciaran Thompson (0-1); Odhrán MacNiallais (0-4, 2f), Leo McLoone, Eoin McHugh. Subs: Frank McGlynn for McBrearty (26 mins), Martin McElhinney and Kieran Gillespie for Thompson and McLoone (half-time), Anthony Thompson for McElhinney (47 mins Black card), Michael Carroll for McFadden (60 mins), Ciaran Thompson for Ward (65 mins).

The Game at a Glance

MAN OF THE MATCH

Eoin Donnelly (Fermanagh): Donnelly is one of the best midfielders in Ulster and he delivered a super performance on Wednesday night. Donegal couldn't deal with his power and he also helped himself to two points. Barry Mulrone had a fine game for Fermanagh, while Paddy McGrath had another solid seventy minutes for Donegal. Caolan Ward impressed at centre half-back once again, and he has shown that he is more than capable of playing at this level.

ULSTER SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP 2016



Donegal squad 2016

ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINAL

Odhran Mac Niallais and Frank McGlynn outstanding as Donegal brush aside Fermanagh

NEIL MCGEE SHOWN STRAIGHT RED

PETER CAMPBELL
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Despite losing Neil McGee to a straight red card on the stroke of half-time, Donegal still had too much for a disappointing Fermanagh in the Ulster championship quarter-final in MacCumhail Park, Ballybofey.

Donegal.....2-12
Fermanagh.....0-11

It took two high quality goals, both finished by Odhran Mac Niallais (with Frank McGlynn and Martin McElhinney involved in both) to seal the victory.

But the big talking point came in first half added time. With two points between the sides, a high ball into the Donegal area was fielded by Sean Quigley. The full-forward was dispossessed by Neil McGee, who seemed to strike out as he tried to burst clear.

McGee was shown a straight red card and Fermanagh awarded a penalty, but Quigley was unable to

convert as Donegal keeper Mark Anthony McGinley made a good save.

It was a big talking point at half-time as Fermanagh had finished the first half really well. But they were never really to make anything of the numerical advantage in the second period as Donegal upped the tempo.

Any chance of an upset was put to bed as early as the 44th minute when Donegal got their second goal, a score of real quality with Odhran Mac Niallais on the end of a sweeping move to palm home.

The goal put Donegal 2-7 to 0-8 in front and they went on to add the next three points to lead by eight in the 52nd minute. In the middle of this period of dominance Fermanagh lost one of their better performers, full-back Che Cullen.

From there to the end, it was academic as Fermanagh were toothless in attack and Donegal did not miss their talismanic defender McGee. Indeed, one of the statistics of the game was that Fermanagh failed to hit a wide in



the second half and had just one point from play in that period.

GOOD OPENING

Donegal looked in control until just before half-time when it all kicked off. Points from Patrick McBrearty and Frank McGlynn had Donegal on the board inside five minutes.

Fermanagh hit back with Tomás Corrigan converting a free after a high tackle from Rory Kavanagh who picked up a yellow card (which saw the St. Eunan's man withdrawn five minutes later). Barry Mulrone levelled on 10 minutes, but then Donegal took a grip, thanks to a wonderful period from Odhran Mac Niallais.

Firstly Martin O'Reilly outstripped the Fermanagh defence and fisted a point when in on goal, but then on 14 minutes, Martin McElhinney and McGlynn were involved before the latter's pass to Mac Niallais, who rifled past Christopher Snow.

Sean Quigley responded with a mighty effort from fully 55m but quick points from Eoin McHugh and a

Patrick McBrearty free after Mac Niallais was fouled and Donegal were five clear.

They almost got a second goal when Mac Niallais found McBrearty with a long, diagonal ball. The Kilcar man broke through two tackles but his goalbound effort was very well saved by an advancing Snow.

But Fermanagh kept plugging away with Eoin Donnelly beginning to get a grip at mid-field. Corrigan, from a free, and Donnelly, from play, reduced the margin to three and while Mac Niallais hit a wonder point to edge Donegal four clear, two Corrigan frees had the margin down to two as the game entered added time.

Then came the red card for Neil McGee and the penalty save by McGinley from Quigley, which left the half-time score, Donegal 1-6, Fermanagh 0-7.

Donegal will now meet Monaghan in the Ulster semi-final, which has been set for Saturday week next, June 25th, but they will do so without Neil McGee, who would have been wanted to mark Conor McManus!

Eoin McHugh: In from the start, McHugh showed his worth with two points and his pace was a real problem for Fermanagh. 8

Ryan McHugh: Another very good display from the versatile Kilcar man, who was back at corner-back in the second half. 8

Patrick McBrearty: Was a lone striker for much of the game, but still gave the Fermanagh last line plenty to think about. 7.5

Mark McHugh: In for the last 15 minutes, McHugh got on a lot of ball but the game was almost over at that stage. 6

MATCH FACTS

FREES: Donegal 18 (8 in first half). Fermanagh 17 (11)

WIDES: Donegal 5 (2). Fermanagh 3 (3).

YELLOW CARDS: Donegal: Rory Kavanagh, Leo McLoone, Michael Murphy, Hugh McFadden

Fermanagh: Barry Mulrone, Ryan Jones, Mickey Jones

BLACK CARDS: Aidan Breen (Fermanagh)

RED CARDS: Neil McGee (Donegal)

MAN OF THE MATCH

This is shared by two Donegal men - Frank McGlynn and Odhran Mac Niallais, who were both outstanding. Mac Niallais scored both Donegal goals while McGlynn was involved in both as well as much, much more. There were others, too, such as the McHugh cousins, Eoin and Ryan, who were very influential in this win.

DONEGAL: Mark Anthony McGinley; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Ryan McHugh, Frank McGlynn (0-1), Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh, Hugh McFadden; Eoin McHugh (0-2), Martin McElhinney (0-1), Odhrán Mac Niallais (2-1); Patrick McBrearty (0-3,1f), Michael Murphy (0-1,f) Martin O'Reilly (0-2). Subs., Leo McLoone for Kavanagh 13; Christy Toye for McLoone ht; Rory Kavanagh for McGlynn 53; Mark McHugh for McElhinney 58; Colm McFadden (0-1,f) for McBrearty 70.

FERMANAGH: Christopher Snow; Mickey Jones, Che Cullen, Marty O'Brien; Declan McCusker, James McMahon, Barry Mulrone (0-1); Eoin Donnelly (0-1), Aidan Breen; Paul McCusker, Ryan Jones (0-1), Richard O'Callaghan; Ruairi Corrigan, Sean Quigley (0-1), Tomás Corrigan (0-7,7f). Subs., Damien Kelly for Cullen bcard; Niall Cassidy for R Corrigan, both 47; Ryan Lyons for Breen; Conall Jones for McMahon, both 58; Daniel Teague for P McCusker 65; Ciaran Flaherty for O'Brien 72

REFEREE: Maurice Deegan (Laois)

GAA - ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

Late leveller

DONEGAL 1-11
MONAGHAN 0-14

BY RYAN FERRY

DONEGAL and Monaghan will have to do it all again after Conor McManus notched a late free to send the Ulster Senior Football Championship semi-final to a replay.

It was an absorbing, bruising contest that could have went either way, and while tensions were still high at the full-time whistle, when both teams reached the sanctimony of the dressing rooms afterwards they were probably just glad to be still in with a shout of provincial glory.

The first half was physical and tactical, and the sides were level at six points apiece at the interval.

Donegal made a bright start to the second half, but their shooting let them down badly.

Debutant Kieran Gillespie squandered a goal chance, while the normally so reliable Michael Murphy missed three frees, and Patrick McBrearty also kicked a placed ball wide.

Monaghan moved three points clear and while McBrearty did reduce that to two, it looked like Donegal had a mountain to climb when Martin McElhinney was red-carded in the 55th minute.

However, Rory Gallagher's team kept their composure and Odhrán MacNiallais finished off a well-worked move two minutes later to put them ahead.

Donegal managed to keep their noses in front until injury-time, but then McManus took control of proceedings with his side facing the exit.

He lofted over two massive frees to level matters, and while Christy Toye put Donegal in front again, there was still time for McManus to convert another placed ball at the death to set up a replay next week.

Having played against each other in the last three Ulster Finals, there weren't many secrets to contain between the sides.

They know each other inside out, and their previous encounters indicated that there wouldn't be much between them.

A real new-age game ensued. Double sweepers were employed on both sides, and the traditional 15 v 15 formation went out the window.

Donegal signalled their intent straight from the throw-in with Karl Lacey collected Michael Murphy's pass and dissected the posts.

The first ten minutes were tough as the sides got reacquainted with each other once again, but Murphy - who had been held scoreless from play on the last three occasions that he faced Monaghan - looked lively.

The big Glenswilly man operated in at full-forward and he tapped down Martin O'Reilly's high ball to himself in the 10th minute, and then curled over via the post.

Monaghan went straight down the field and scored with Shane Carey receiving a pass from Ryan Wylie before slotting over from a tight angle.

Darren Hughes almost got Carey in on goal two minutes later, but the Donegal defence survived, and they then earned a free when Gillespie was pulled back, which Murphy scored.

Donegal were on top, but sloppy defensive play saw Eamon McGee pick the ball off the ground, and McManus gleefully put the ball between the posts.

Monaghan were enjoying their best spell of the match and they struck the next three points with Conor McCarthy curling over, and McManus landing a brace.

However, Donegal were able to stay with their opponents and McBrearty responded with two points, the second a great score from play after an incisive run from Eoin McHugh.

Murphy was determined to make an impression and he thundered into Drew Wylie, before winning a free in the 32nd minute, which McBrearty scored.

McManus replied with a free and there was some more argy bargy as the teams tried to get off the pitch at half-time.

Cool heads were needed, but in the pressure cooker in the second half, a number of men struggled with the championship heat.

Murphy tapped over a free, but the elusive Owen Duffy went straight down the field and fisted over.

Then, Donegal opened up Monaghan for the first time. McElhinney and Anthony Thompson linked up to put Gillespie through on goal, but it was a case of the wrong man in the right position as he drove his shot straight at Monaghan goalkeeper Rory Beggan.

McManus was well shackled by McGrath, but he showed his class with a mesmerising point from the right wing, and Karl O'Connell then popped over.

Murphy was struggling to find his range from frees, and when O'Connell notched another point, Monaghan were three ahead after 48 minutes, and growing in confidence.

However, Donegal were creating goal chances, and McBrearty should have found the net, but blazed over.

Donegal were then dealt a huge blow, when McElhinney body-checked Drew Wylie. He picked up a black card to add to the yellow he received earlier in the game.

However, given the defensive nature of the game, the numerical disadvantage didn't have a huge bearing.

It did give Donegal another jolt into life, and Martin O'Reilly found MacNiallais with a great pass and the Gaoth Dobhair man showed good feet, before slotting the ball low to the net.

McCarthy equalised with a free, but Donegal had rediscovered their swagger and points from McBrearty (free) and Eoin McHugh saw them move ahead once again.

The referee Joe McQuillan announced that there would be six minutes of injury-time and that gave Monaghan a lift.

After McManus had missed a free, and Monaghan goalkeeper Rory Beggan was off target from distance, Donegal may have felt they were safe to foul 50 metres out from goal.

However, they weren't and McManus landed two monster frees to level things up.

They came forward to get the winner, but a brilliant Murphy interception led to Donegal breaking and Christy Toye fisted Donegal in front.

They just had to hold on for another two minutes, but a needless late hit from Anthony Thompson on O'Connell gave McManus a simple free that he was never going to miss to secure a draw.

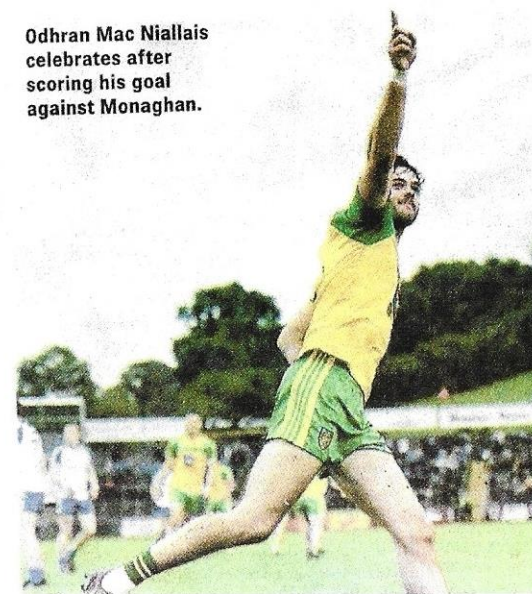
The sides will have to do it again next week and another war of attrition lies in store.

DONEGAL: Mark Anthony McGinley; Paddy McGrath, Eamon McGee, Kieran Gillespie; Eoin McHugh (0-1), Ryan McHugh, Martin O'Reilly; Rory Kavanagh, Odhrán MacNiallais (1-0); Karl Lacey (0-1), Frank McGlynn, Anthony Thompson; Patrick McBrearty (0-5, 3fs), Michael Murphy (0-4, 3fs), Martin McElhinney. Subs: Mark McHugh for McGlynn (65 mins), Christy Toye (0-1) for Kavanagh (68 mins), Eoghan 'Ban' Gallagher for O'Reilly (70+6 mins).

MONAGHAN: Rory Beggan; Drew Wylie, Vinny Corey, Colin Walshe; Kieran Duffy, Ryan Wylie, Darren Hughes; Fintan Kelly, Karl O'Connell (0-2); Shane Carey (0-1), Ryan McAnespie, Owen Duffy (0-1); Conor McCarthy (0-2, 1f), Kieran Hughes, Conor McManus. Subs: Dessie Mone and Daniel McKenna for D.Wylie and McCarthy (59 mins), Conor Boyle for Walshe (61 mins Black Card), Jack McCarron for Carey (65 mins), Dick Clerkin for McAnespie (70+1 mins).

Referee: Joe McQuillan (Cavan).

Odhran Mac Niallais celebrates after scoring his goal against Monaghan.



GAA - ULSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL REPLAY

Donegal edge out Monaghan

DONEGAL 0-17
MONAGHAN 2-10

BY RYAN FERRY

DONEGAL could have won by seven or eight points but in the end only one was needed as they defeated Monaghan in Saturday's replay at Kingspan Breffni Park to reach the Ulster Final for the sixth successive year.

Not since the great Down team of the sixties has a county reached six Ulster deciders in-a-row, but now Donegal join that illustrious company following a sweet victory over rivals Monaghan in Cavan on Sunday.

After the sides had played out a nerve-wrecking encounter the previous Saturday, another close battle was anticipated, but that's not how it played out.

Donegal started the game brilliantly and went five points clear, but the concession of the softest of soft goals to Shane Carey kept Monaghan in touch.

Rory Gallagher's team continued to dominate, but the Farney county drew level when Conor McManus slammed a penalty to the net in the 33rd minute.

Donegal finished the first half strongly and they were always able to stay narrowly in front of their opponents in a tense second half.

Rory Kavanagh was sent off late on, and Monaghan reduced their deficit to one point as the five minutes of injury-time that Maurice Deegan had permitted drew to a close.

Monaghan would have one more chance, but it fell to the wrong man, and wing-back Kieran Duffy failed to hit the target.

Malachy O'Rourke's team relinquished their provincial crown and Donegal will now move into the Ulster Final in two weeks' time where they will hope to get their hands on the Anglo Celt Cup again after its 12-month hiatus in the Farney county.

The sides could not be separated when they met seven days earlier, with Conor McManus notching a late free to set up a replay.

The drawn match had been an enthralling battle with incident aplenty both on the field and on the sideline.

Another tit-for-tat battle was expected, however Donegal got off to an excellent start.

Rory Kavanagh slotted over after only 30 seconds and six minutes later, Anthony Thompson sent a high hanging shot over the bar.

Monaghan got on plenty of ball in the opening ten minutes, but they were wasteful, posting four wides, while they also dropped short.

In the drawn match, Donegal had hammered all their kick-outs long down the field, but Monaghan opted to let them play their restarts short, and that suited Gallagher's men.

Michael Murphy showed there would be no long-lasting effects of his off day a week earlier, by slotting over a '45', while Martin McElhinney and Patrick McBrearty (free) were also on target.

Monaghan needed a score, and they got one from Shane Carey in the 17th minute, although the Donegal camp felt the ball had gone wide.

They also earned a free two minutes later, and it seemed to be a fairly straight forward kick for McManus.

However, with Donegal sleeping, the Monaghan corner-forward cleverly decided to play it inside to Carey, who finished into the bottom corner.

Donegal were kicking themselves, and what was worse was that McManus had previous for pulling off that trick in Ulster semi-finals, as he set up Tommy Freeman for a goal in similar circumstances four years earlier.

McBrearty settled Donegal with another free, and Martin O'Reilly and Murphy (free) also got in on the act as Donegal responded well.

McManus curled over from an acute angle and his team were awarded a penalty in the 33rd minute when Ryan Wylie cut inside Eoin McHugh and was fouled by Anthony Thompson as he prepared to pull the trigger.

Mark Anthony McGinley attempted to psyche out McManus, but it didn't work as he fired into the top corner.

It was another setback for Donegal, but late points from Frank McGlynn and Murphy (free) gave Gallagher's side a slight cushion at the break, even if it was nowhere near reflective of the control they had enjoyed.

The second half started at a fast pace with McManus pointing after only ten seconds, but McBrearty soon cancelled it out with a free.

Owen Duffy and Mark McHugh then swapped points and 14 minutes would elapse before the next score would arrive off Conor Boyle's right foot.

Murphy replied with a free, and the big full-forward then picked out McBrearty to curl over from play.

O'Rourke went to his bench to add fresh impetus, and Jack McCarron made an instant impression with a lovely point, but O'Reilly went down the other end and pointed for Donegal.

Another replacement Conor McCarthy almost scored a third goal for Monaghan after robbing Karl Lacey but his delicate chip hit the crossbar and Donegal survived.

The tension rose as McManus added another free, but again the indefatigable O'Reilly replied with a point for Donegal.

Rory Kavanagh was then dismissed after picking up a second yellow card, and the momentum seemed to be with Monaghan when McManus converted a '45', and McCarron curled over from distance.

Yet, Monaghan would only end the game with just 14 players, after Karl O'Connell was black-carded for a foul on Ryan McHugh, and Monaghan had already used their full quota of six subs.

Murphy slotted over the resulting free, but five minutes of injury-time were to be played and that gave Monaghan hope.

Colin Walshe curled over and they needed just one more point to force extra-time, but Donegal held on and their delight at the final whistle indicated just how much it meant to the players and management.

Donegal: Mark Anthony McGinley; Paddy McGrath, Eamon McGee, Kieran Gillespie; Eoin McHugh, Ryan McHugh, Frank McGlynn (0-1); Rory Kavanagh (0-1), Odhrán MacNiallais; Anthony Thompson (0-1), Karl Lacey, Martin O'Reilly (0-3); Patrick McBrearty (0-4, 3fs), Michael Murphy (0-5, 3fs, 1'45'), Martin McElhinney (0-1). **Subs:** Mark McHugh (0-1) for Thompson (34 mins Black Card), Christy Toye for McElhinney (53 mins), Martin McElhinney for MacNiallais (70 mins), Eoghan Ban Gallagher for O'Reilly (74 mins).

Monaghan: Rory Beggan; Colin Walshe (0-1), Vinny Corey, Drew Wylie; Karl O'Connell, Ryan Wylie; Kieran Duffy, Fintan Kelly, Kieran Hughes; Owen Duffy, Ryan McAnespie, Shane Carey (1-1); Daniel McKenna, Darren Hughes, Conor McManus (1-4, 1 pen, 1f, 1'45'). **Subs:** Dermot Malone and Neil McAdam for McKenna and D. Wylie (half-time), Conor Boyle (0-1) for R. Wylie (46 mins), Conor McCarthy for Carey (49 mins), Jack McCarron (0-2) for K. Hughes (54 mins), Dessie Mone for Kelly (64 mins). **Referee:** Maurice Deegan (Laois).

MAN OF THE MATCH

Martin O'Reilly: Donegal knew they had to stop Karl O'Connell in the replay and Martin O'Reilly was the man tasked with that responsibility. He passed that assignment with flying colours and even managed to put O'Connell on the back foot and score three points. Frank McGlynn and Eamon McGee were also fantastic for Donegal, while Michael Murphy was outstanding in the closing exchanges.

THE WHISTLER

Maurice Deegan had a decent outing. He got all the big calls right, although Darren Hughes should have been black-carded in the first half, and both teams got some frees of the soft variety. However, five minutes of injury-time was excessive.



Tyrone lay Donegal hoodoo at the death after pulsating decider

THE IRISH TIMES
Monday, July 18, 2016

Red Hand score two superb points in injury time to lift first Ulster title since 2010

Tyrone tyros come of age as battling Donegal eventually run out of steam



Keith Duggan
at St Tiernach's Park, Clones

Tyrone 0-13
Donegal 0-11

You remember these days when you live through them.

The Anglo-Celt will winter in Moy after Tyrone wrestled the famous old cup out of Donegal hands – and indeed cast Donegal demons out of their subconscious – on a hot, epic day in Clones.

This was a breathtaking football match. For 76 gruelling, draining minutes on a close afternoon, the two teams who have been sparring bitterly throughout this decade kept coming at each other, blow for blow, point for point.

It went the way that everyone predicted, draining all time out of the game and all energy out of the full house of 33,433. Donegal, tormentors of Tyrone for five winters and summers, re-

fused to bow. Tyrone, the challengers, refused to accept the same old answer.

Tyrone football families have seen the wonders of the world several times over under Mickey Harte's stewardship, but this win was up there with them.

The quality of those their winning points seemed to light the way for a new generation of Red Hand supremacy.

Yes, the masterwork of Seán Cavanagh, the abiding connection to all three All-Ireland wins, was embroiled through this 14th Ulster success. But the outrageous lead point, thumped through the dead heat by Peter Harte, was like one of those wincing uppercuts from early-era Mike Tyson. And with the sweet confidence of Kieran McGeary's note, you could almost hear the pendulum swing through the sky in Clones town, from the Atlantic side to Neagh side.

Five-year project

Beating Donegal became the five-year project that Mickey Harte never expected and afterwards he rightly noted the Red Hand county had maybe forgotten the significance of these days between 2008 and 2010 when they were unassailable in Ulster. They remembered now.

Tyrone started and finished this Ulster final better, but for

the hour in between they grappled with a Donegal team that seem to believe they can go on forever. Veterans like Frank McGlynn, Christy Toye – bounding in with superhero cape for the usual last 10 minutes of outrageous influence – and Neil McGee grew in stature.

By half-time, the know-how and experience of the last five Ulster finals was shining bright. The Tyrone scoring machine had been held to 0-4. Rory Gallagher's match-ups were spot on and Donegal, through the ridiculous skill of Ryan McHugh, were dictating the pace of the game.

The half-time betting odds, when Donegal led by 0-7 to 0-4, must have shored dramatically in their favour.

The game had hardly reached the end of its first period when it became clear to those present that they were watching one of the great virtu-

By the numbers

Tyrone	Donegal
SCORES	
0-13	0-11
FROM PLAY	
0-11	0-6
FROM PLACED BALLS	
0-2	0-4
WIDES	
15	7
45s	
2	1
FREES CONCEDED	
17	12
YELLOW CARDS	
0	2
BLACK CARDS	
2	0
RED CARDS	
0	0
ATTENDANCE	
33,433	

oso performances given in Clones in any July.

Ryan McHugh was magnificent here, kicking three sumptuous points from distance through a thicket of Tyrone men. His elusive, quick-slow running with the ball bamboozled Mickey Harte's defensive strategy and he twice forced frees that were converted. Worse, he was absorbing all the energies of Tyrone's own creative attacking engine, Peter Harte.

Liberated

Tyrone didn't blink. After half time, they liberated Harte from the distraction of McHugh and defended even deeper and waited and pounced.

And fatally, Donegal's forward thrust stalled. They failed to make the incisions, the scores dried up and they couldn't get Michael Murphy involved anything like enough.

By the 53rd minute Tyrone had levelled the match at 0-8 each and looked like a liberated team.

A year ago, on an apocalyptically grim day in Ballybofey, Donegal had set the terms of engagement. Now, on level terms, Tyrone were able to do so as the sun beat down mercilessly.

Donegal stuck with this on pure courage and instinct; a beauty of a point from Odhrán MacNiallais and a long-distance free – created by the remarkable Toye – that Murphy converted.

And when Toye bolted into space and hooked one of his trademark right-footed scores to edge Donegal in front in the frantic, edge-of-seat last two minutes, it seemed as if Donegal's deathless capacity for rein-

vention would win the day.

But no. Six minutes of added time on the clock and a new surge of anticipation through the parched, sunburnt crowd.

Cavanagh quickly replied with as good a point as he has ever scored and with that you could see belief surging through Mickey Harte's team. White shirts running from everywhere now.

Perhaps fuelled by the accumulated hurt of the past five years, they made the decisive move and won the contest with two magnificent points kicked from distance.

After five years of anguished waiting and losing, the Anglo-Celt was delivered back into the hands of Mickey Harte in less than five minutes.

Infuriated traditionalists

It was cagey and tough and probably infuriated the traditionalists clinging to the vision of a game that doesn't exist anymore. But it was a proper, heavyweight championship game between two incredibly proud sides.

Early on, the crowd learned not to expect much by way of goals. This was not a day for luxury. Any player with the ball in hand close to goal was soon engulfed. Cathal McCarron, who has become a quietly vital presence to this latest Tyrone side,

TYRONE: 1N Morgan (0-2/45s), 2A McCrory, 3R McNamee, 4C McCarron (0-1), 8C Cavanagh, 6J McMahon, 5T McCann, 10C McShane (0-1), 7P Harte (0-2), 9M Donnelly, 12R McNab, 14S Cavanagh (0-3), 11N Sludden (0-1), 13C McAliskey, 15R O'Neill. **Subs:** 18R Brennan (0-1) for M Donnelly (BC, 33 mins), 20M Bradley for C McShane (BC, half time), 19J Monroe for R O'Neill (54 mins), 22D McCurry (0-1) for C McAliskey (62 mins), 23K McGeary (0-1) for J McMahon (71 mins). **DONEGAL:** 1MA McGinley, 2P McGrath, 3N McGee, 4C Gillespie, 6K Lacey, 10A Thompson, 7F McGlynn, 8R Kavanagh, 9O McNiallais (0-2), 5R McHugh (0-3), 14M Murphy (0-2/45, free), 12E McHugh, 15M O'Reilly, 13P McBrearty (0-30-2 frees.), **Subs:** 11Mc McElhinney for R Kavanagh (44 mins), 18M McHugh for A Thompson (54 mins), 22C Toye (0-1) for F McGlynn (62 mins), 23E Gallagher for C Gillespie (67 mins), 10A Thompson for E McHugh (67 mins), 25C McFadden for P McBrearty (71 mins). **Referee:** D Coldrick (Meath).

had a half-chance in the first half, while Ciaran Gillespie almost got in through a crafty Karl Lacey pass. But the opportunities were just smoked out by the respective defences. No score was given cheaply.

The game arguably turned when McGlynn, superb here, was flattened by a tough hit by Aidan McCrory, which David Coldrick deemed fair. Tyrone broke and Cavanagh pointed. It was one of those seismic changes of momentum.

It stood out as crucial in an Ulster epic that that stands comparison with the best of previous years.

The consequences of this day are too early to tell. We may have seen the beginning of the end of Donegal's habitual Ulster final appearances. They came desperately close to adding a fourth title to this remarkable period for the county. But writing them off has become a mug's game.

What a story of perseverance and faith for Mickey Harte and Tyrone, though. The Red Hand flag flies high again.

McBrearty hits highest Donegal note

Kilcar man delivers complete performance threatened for so long to lead rescue mission

COLM KEYS



DONEGAL 0-21

CORK 1-15

ROUND 4B QUALIFIER

PADDY McBrearty turns 23 next Friday but it feels like he's been around forever.

His timing has been quite perfect though, coinciding with Jim McGuinness' revolution that has taken Donegal right to the forefront of the game in this decade.

McGuinness saw enough of him to warrant inclusion in all five championship games in 2011 while he was still eligible for minor grade.

Since then he has brought his championship appearance count to 34. Most of the time he has been good, sometimes he's been a notch above that but never to the level he reached against Cork in the first game of this double-header in Croke Park.

This was McBrearty cashing in on the outrageous talent that saw McGuinness pluck him from a minor match that acted as curtain-raiser to their opening game against Antrim five years ago and land him in the thick of things. This was the performance that so often threatened but never quite got there.

Eleven points in all, seven from play, a nightmare for so many Cork defenders tasked with tracking him. "He was exceptionally good. We tried three or four fellas marking him," reported Cork manager Peadar Healy, noting the loss of James Loughrey and Noel Galvin in midweek.

But who could really have stopped him in this irrepressible form? Cork's obsession with tracking Michael Murphy opened doors for him. Some of the points he nailed over his shoulder running away from goals were spectacular.

"It was probably a relief to get out of Ulster to express himself," said his manager Rory Gallagher.

"I know him extremely well with club and county this last number of years, he is capable of those things.

"He wouldn't have gone to that level, that was exceptional. His ball-winning, his decision-making, his finishing was top class."

Naturally McBrearty was a little more reticent about the groove he hit. "The boys had their heads up more than other days. I haven't changed from my own game."

He had to be that good against a resurgent Cork who led for most of the first 62 minutes until Donegal kicked for home with five unanswered points.

Not surprisingly McBrearty's Kilcar club-mates Ryan and Eoin McHugh were at the core of that effort, just as they had been all day. That part of south-west Donegal may have just 900 inhabitants but their contribution to the scoreboard was completely disproportionate to their population with Ryan (three) and Eoin (two) chipping in to bring the parish total to 16 points from 21.

Collectively that's some input into the highest number of scores a Donegal team has amassed in those 34 championship games since McGuinness' arrival.

Eoin's pace and Ryan's guile and agility in possession complemented their in-form colleague inside to eventually bring Cork to their knees.

Healy suggested they had been "ground" down but there was a little

more to it than that. A change in approach after the break saw Donegal sit back much deeper and defend in numbers, something they do so well and which ultimately made a difference that Cork struggled to adapt to.

"In the first half they were getting the short (kick-out) away and were opening us up easily. We weren't able to recover, they came at us with a lot of pace and would have seen how Tyrone, to a certain extent, would have got a lot of joy with it. The second half, we tightened up a lot," Gallagher said.

Such a healthy score will please him but the gaps were sometimes too easily found by Cork's strike runners in the opening period.

From deep positions the likes of Tomas and Tom Clancy, Colm and Kevin O'Driscoll all picked holes for points. Sean Powter skipped past Odran MacNiallais at one stage for their third point as if he wasn't there. When kick-outs went long generally Alan O'Connor and Ian Maguire gave Cork the edge.

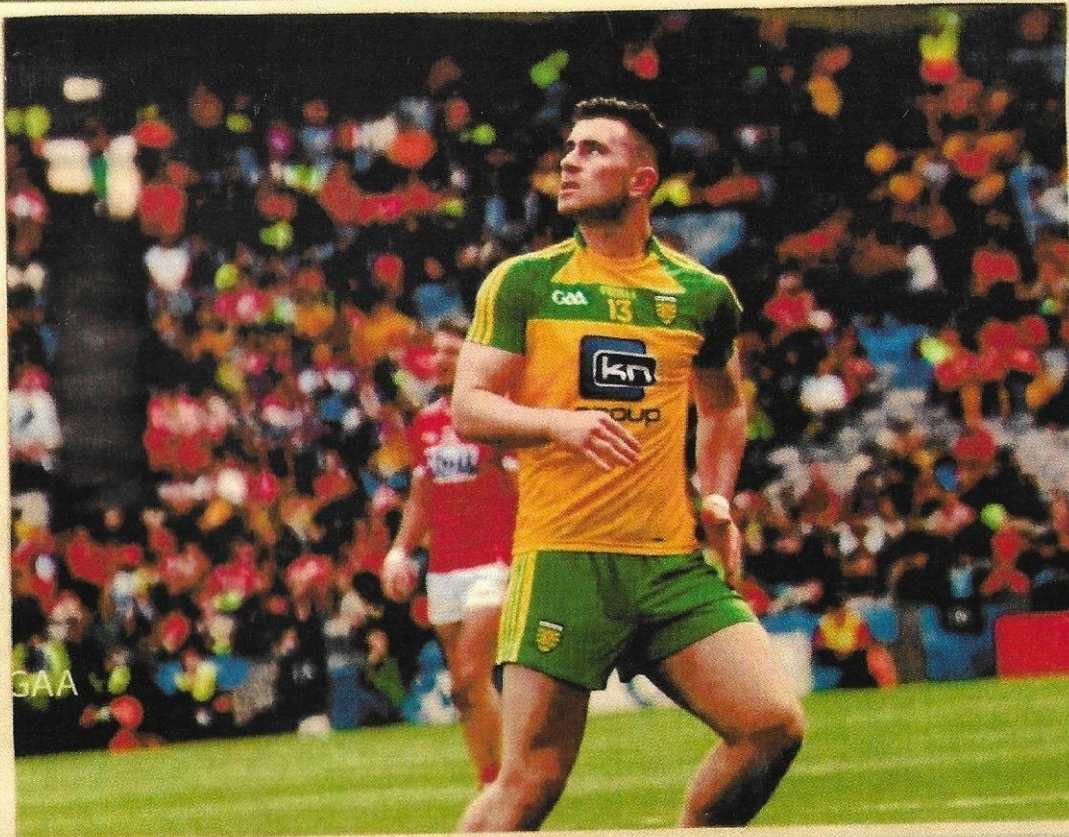
SWIFT

The goal exposed Donegal most. The decision to penalise Paddy McGrath in the first place was questionable but the response from Cork was swift, Tomas Clancy putting in Paul Kerrihan behind the cover for a smart finish and a 1-6 to 0-4 lead in the 17th minute.

But by the 30th minute they were level, 1-7 to 0-10, as McBrearty really got to work.

They needed a decent block by Neil McGee on Maguire after another fine Cork build up as half-time approached to avoid further slippage.

Cork got Aidan Walsh on to the pitch and he fired over a great point to restore a lead that Donegal had twice pulled back in the early stages of the second half but the Rebels were



beginning to run out of road.

It took patience on Donegal's part though. Leo McLoone, overlooked for involvement in the Ulster final defeat to Tyrone, came in and made an impact with a couple of crucial tackles.

"It's the third time in six years that they recovered from an Ulster final defeat to make an All-Ireland quarter-final, the sixth time in succession that they've made it to the 'last eight'."

"I don't think we'll realise it until we're all retired and have the feet up and realise what we're achieving at the minute but we take every game as it comes," reflected McBrearty, who credited their first training session after the Tyrone match with setting the right tone for the response.

"We have some great leaders in the team. We trained in Letterkenny the Tuesday after the game and a lot of the older boys really pushed it on. It was either let the ship sink or keep going."

Looking ahead to Dublin, Gallagher paid little heed to the two league meetings between them that Donegal lost this year.

"Look at the first one, we were leading the game 0-6 to 0-5 with 40 odd minutes gone we felt that was the important one. We lost Michael

(Murphy) then, I think it was a point down. We were 0-9 0-7 then with 65 or 66 minutes played. The second one, obviously Dublin ran away with it. But we won't lose any sleep over it."

For Cork there is redemption of sorts after a poor season.

"The Cork supporters, they're tough boys to please. We've taken a lot of criticism. Peadar Healy would be very critical of Peadar Healy, that's for sure," said the manager.

"It isn't all doom and gloom either, it was a good experience for them. We just needed more consistent performances like this. If we had more of that throughout the year, we'd have had a better year."

SCORERS - Donegal: P. McBrearty 0-1 (14), R. McKee 0-3, E. McHugh, M. Murphy 0-2 each, L. Leary, J. McGuire, O. MacNiallais 0-1 each. Cork: P. Kerrihan 1-1, D. Clancy, N. O'Driscoll, C. O'Driscoll, Tom Clancy, C. Healy 0-1 each, S. Powter, Tomas Clancy, A. Walsh, M. Maguire 0-1 each.

DONEGAL: P. McBrearty (14), M. Murphy (11), E. McHugh (6), R. Kerrihan (3), E. McHugh (3), S. Powter (3), J. McGuire (2), N. O'Driscoll (2), M. Maguire (2), C. Healy (2), L. Leary (1), O. MacNiallais (1), D. Clancy (1), C. O'Driscoll (1).

CORK: P. Kerrihan (1), D. Clancy (1), N. O'Driscoll (1), C. O'Driscoll (1), S. Powter (1), Tomas Clancy (1), A. Walsh (1), M. Maguire (1), E. McHugh (1), R. McKee (1), R. Kerrihan (1), J. McGuire (1).

REF: Neilie Rossomano

COLLINS CALLS FOR RENEWED REBEL EFFORT

CORK'S Mark Collins has called for a renewed effort to restore Cork as a force after a disappointing season.

Collins (right) hopes that the squad can stick together despite the looming threat of retirement from another large bank of their 2010 All-Ireland winners.

According to the Castlehaven clubman, it's the fault of the players that they have become mired in mediocrity over the last number of years, culminating in relegation from Division One and a Munster semi-final defeat to Tipperary.

"Cork are a big county. We should be well up there with the talent that is inside in that dressing room," he said. "We should be here every year and competing with these teams. Since 2012 we haven't beaten a Division One team. That's not good enough for a county the size of Cork."

"We've let ourselves down more than anything else with the performances we've given over the last few years.

"Kildare last year? We couldn't blame anyone only ourselves for that. Tigg this year, that was disappointing. We can't complain about it."

Collins feels they are a tight-knit group and will kick on. "We said in the dressing room we all have to stick together. There is the bones of a serious team there but unfortunately we're not producing it at the moment."

"Whatever it is, whatever we're missing, we'll just have to go at it again."

Cork manager Peadar Healy doesn't believe that it's possible for dual players like Aidan Walsh and Alan Cadogan to prosper on both fronts and Collins hopes they will commit to the footballers next year.

"Obviously it's their own decision. They thoroughly enjoyed their couple of weeks in here," said Collins.

"To be fair to the group we've been knocked, we disappointed a lot but we've always stuck together. A lot of us are very close. Hopefully they might stick with it next year."



Depleted Dublin forced to dig deep to finally subdue dogged Donegal

Champions finish with 13 men and effectively have to win the match twice

Superior scoring threat and a diligent defence ensures victory for Gavin's men

Seán Moran
at Croke Park

Dublin 1-15
Donegal 1-10

Dublin's march on the county's first back-to-back All-Ireland in nearly 40 years took an eventful road through old rivals Donegal in Saturday's All-Ireland quarter-final before a capacity crowd in Croke Park.

Replacement Paul Mannion sealed the deal with a great goal six minutes into injury-time, drifting past a tiring defence and accelerating from a point-scoring position to the place where he could slide the ball past Mark Anthony McGinley with a finish that was calm and decisive.

Having controlled the match with admirable poise for the first 40 minutes, the champions gave themselves big problems and reawakened long-lost possibilities for their opponents by conceding a sloppy goal and then sustaining personnel loss with Diarmuid Connolly picking up a second inju-

ry a couple of minutes later.

Deep in injury-time the team would lose a second player when another indiscipline recidivist Eoghan O'Gara was red-carded for striking Niall McGee.

Manager Jim Gavin defended his players but as someone who values self-control and focus he will be unhappy that the team is still being weakened by players' inability to resist the – admittedly in Connolly's case now routine – provocation of opponents.

Vexed

He declined to get involved on the issue of Donegal's transgressions but is presumably vexed that Michael Murphy 14th-minute clatter on Brian Fenton fetched just a yellow card although in fairness to the referee, the extent of it was really only clear on a couple of reviews.

There was however plenty of encouragement for Gavin. His defence, missing half of its All-Ireland personnel – James McCarthy's withdrawal before the throw-in confirming what had been widely suspected about his injury – played diligently and effectively. Philip McMahon had his best perfor-

mance of the campaign and rookie corner back David Byrne also gave an impressive display.

It's not that Donegal threatened for much of the match. Rory Gallagher's team contented themselves with sitting back until the quarter-final lurched back into play after around 45 minutes. But when the Ulster finalists did commit to attack, Murphy and Patrick McBrearty, whose shooting prowess downed Cork a week previously, were well marked, managing just a point from play between them.

Defensive system

Dublin's defensive system, built on the rubble of the Donegal defeat two years ago, did its job, shutting down the middle through which their opponents had made such damaging inroads in 2014. A moment of carelessness by – of all people – Cian O'Sullivan, the key sentry in the restructured defence, opened up the approaches for Ryan McHugh's 44th-minute goal, palmed in after a penetrating run by Eamon McGee.

A feature of the afternoon was the display of Ciarán Kilkenny, who reprised his role from the second half of the Leinster final as a half-back in the absence of McCarthy. More than 50 possessions was the statistical tally for the team's most likely candidate for Footballer of the Year.

Many of them were unchallenged but Kilkenny's ability to direct the traffic and guard against turnovers was hugely impressive even if the loss to the forwards of his being able to manage operations farther up

By the numbers

Dublin	Donegal
SCORES	
1-15	1-10
FROM PLAY	
1-10	1-7
FROM PLACED BALLS	
0-5	0-6
WIDES	
7	8
45s	
1	1
FREES CONCEDED	
17	8
YELLOW CARDS	
4	3
BLACK CARDS	
1	0
RED CARDS	
2	0
ATTENDANCE	
	82,300

2

Barring their goal, Donegal only managed two points from play in Saturday's semi-final defeat

the field and his shooting accuracy – a reminder of which came in the 25th minute when he finished a typically patient build-up involving Paddy Andrews and Kevin McManamon – was also felt.

Donegal looked tired. Their experienced players have been on the go for so long at this stage – Colm McFadden, a major figure in the 2012 All-Ire-

land announced his retirement and there may be others thinking the same way – that they look to embarking on a period of major reconstruction.

But there's still plenty of young talent in the county: the McHugh's, Murphy, McBrearty, Odhrán Mac Niallais for all the flatness of his recent performances.

Centrefield auxiliary

Things had changed however since 2014. Murphy looks in need of a decent break and the absence of Neil Gallagher has stretched the Donegal captain even further in his dual role as centrefield auxiliary and edge-of-the-square threat. The emergence of Brian Fenton in Dublin's centrefield also tilted that balance and he had another phenomenal match before being black carded in injury-time.

Although the match looks like an exercise in the predictable there was a sense when the margin was down to three points, which it was three times in the second half, that even if Dublin weren't exactly in bother, any further reduction of the lead and they would have been.

In that context, two scores in

THE IRISH TIMES
Monday, August 8, 2016

the 60th and 62nd minute were critical. McManamon got the first off a typically powerful run down the left and Jonny Cooper, timing his support run in attack well, kicked the other to give Dublin a five-point cushion.

On a day when established forwards were a bit below-par – aside from Connolly, Bernard Brogan and Andrews were replaced with a point scored between them – McManamon gave a performance that was sustained and productive, Dean Rock's free taking has been reliable as well as taking the pressure off Stephen Cluxton.

Mannion's display off the bench was also a bright spot for Gavin. He secured the team's last 1-1, scores that left the match skewed and cooked.

Kerry are next up at the end of the month by which stage Dublin will hope to have McCarthy back in action.

DUBLIN: 1. Stephen Cluxton; 2. Philip McMahon (0-1); 3. Jonny Cooper (0-1); 4. David Byrne; 12. Ciarán Kilkenny (0-1); 6. Cian O'Sullivan; 7. John Small; 8. Brian Fenton; 9. MD Macauley; 10. Paul Flynn; 12. Diarmuid Connolly (0-2); 11. Kevin McManamon (0-3); 17. Paddy Andrews (0-1); 13. Dean Rock (0-5, four frees, one 45); 15. Bernard Brogan. Subs: 2. Darren Daly for Brogan (48 mins); 18. Denis Bastick for Macauley (53 mins); 24. Paul Mannion (1-1) for Andrews (57 mins); 26. Eoghan O'Gara for McManamon (64 mins); 23. Eric Lowndes for Rock (73 mins); 22. Michael Fitzsimons for Fenton (black card, 78 mins).

DONEGAL: 1. MA McGinley; 2. Paddy McGrath; 3. Neil McGee; 4. Eamonn McGee; 5. Ryan McHugh (1-0); 6. Karl Lacey; 7. Frank McGlynn; 8. Rory Kavanagh; 9. Odhrán Mac Niallais; 10. Anthony Thompson (0-1); 11. Martin McElhinney; 12. Eoin McHugh; 13. Patrick McBrearty (0-3, two frees); 14. Michael Murphy (capt; 0-6, five frees, one 45); 15. Martin O'Reilly; Subs: 17. Ciarán Gillespie for Mac Niallais (half-time); 18. Leo McLone for Kavanagh (42 mins); 19. Christy Toye for Thompson (48 mins); 22. Mark McHugh for E McGee (55 mins); 24. Ciarán Thompson for McElhinney (61 mins); 20. Colm McFadden for Lacey (71 mins).

Referee: Ciarán Branagan (Down).

ALL-IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINAL

MARKSMAN with Peter Campbell

Donegal Player Ratings v Dublin

Mark Anthony McGinley: Made a super stop in opening seconds from Diarmuid Connolly and can be happy with his display overall. **7.5**

Paddy McGrath: Another tireless display, he started and finished on McManamon, keeping Diarmuid Connolly company for a period also. **7**

Neil McGee: A competent display, but didn't get forward as he might in other games. **6.5**

Eamon McGee: Was good in defence before picking up a yellow card in second half and later withdrawn. Got forward to play a big part in the Donegal goal, his pinpoint pass leaving Ryan McHugh with a tap in. **7**

Ryan McHugh: Another good display from the Kilcar man, who came in for some rough treatment. Got another trademark goal against the Dubs. **7.5**

Karl Lacey: Worked tirelessly but wasn't able to make the penetrating runs that we were treated to. Had one effort go just wide. **6.5**

Frank McGlynn: Tried hard to make inroads through the middle, but found it tough against an uncompromising Dublin defence. **6.5**

Michael Murphy: As always started at midfield and contributed six great points, but was not able to force much in general play. **7**

Odhrán Mac Niallais: Never really got into the game and was withdrawn at half-time. **5**

Anthony Thompson: Worked really hard and created a couple of open-

ings, finishing one himself before half-time. **7**

Martin McElhinney: Got on a lot of ball but was dispossessed on a number of occasions. **5.5**

Eoin McHugh: Tried everything in his locker to take on the Dubs. Had a couple of efforts that drifted wide, but left everything on the field. **7**

Patrick McBrearty: Missed a couple of chances that were going over against Cork, one after just 46 seconds. Much more traffic to negotiate in this game. **7**

Rory Kavanagh: Made a good contribution in the opening half before withdrawn early in second. **6.5**

Martin O'Reilly: Given the short straw at start, marking Diarmuid Connolly. Got forward on a number of runs and was involved in Donegal goal. **6.5**

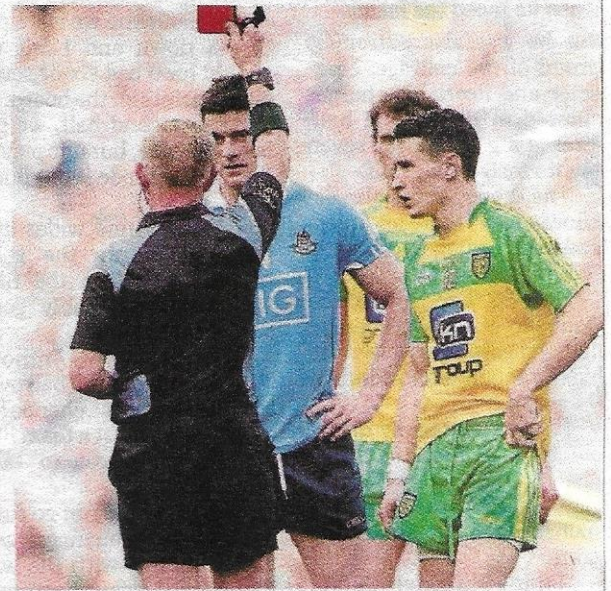
Ciaran Gillespie: In at half-time for Mac Niallais, Gillespie put in a good shift. **6.5**

Leo McLoone: In after 42 minutes, McLoone was not as influential as against Cork, but played a big part in the goal. **6.5**

Christy Toyne: Playing in a record 65th championship game, Christy again made a contribution, winning a free near the end as well as taking the game to Dublin. **7**

Mark McHugh: In for Eamon McGee in 55th minute, McHugh didn't see that much action. **5.5**

Ciaran Thompson (making his championship debut) and **Colm McFadden** (his final appearance): **Not on long enough to rate**



Dublin's Diarmuid Connolly is shown a red card by referee Ciaran Branagan. Photo: INPHO/Ryan Byrne

DUBLIN	1-15	
DONEGAL	1-10	



GAA - NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Donegal get off to a flying start

DOWN 0-07
 DONEGAL 3-15

BY RYAN FERRY

DONEGAL got their NFL campaign off to a flying start on Saturday night when they hammered a dire Down side at Pairc Esler.

The visitors led by six points at the break mainly due to the free-taking brilliance of Michael Murphy, although goalkeeper Peter Boyle was also to the fore with a magnificent save from Donal O'Hare's penalty.

Down were out-muscled and out-thought for the majority of the game and things got worse in the second half when Ryan McHugh and Patrick McBrearty scored excellent goals.

McHugh notched his second goal in the 59th minute, as Donegal collected their first away victory in the league since 2009.

Rory Gallagher gave league starts to Ciaran Thompson and Michael Carroll, while Boyle was selected in goal ahead of Danny Rodgers for the first time since the opening game of Jim McGuinness' reign against Sligo back in 2011.

Donegal started brightly with Ciaran Thompson curling over after four minutes, and Murphy followed up with a 50 metre free.

Arthur McConville got Down off the mark with a free, but points from Patrick McBrearty and Murphy (free) extended Donegal's lead.

Down were flat in the opening

quarter, but Conaill McGovern tapped over in the 18th minute, and from the resulting kick-out they earned a penalty.

A mix-up between Boyle and Eamonn Doherty allowed Ryan Johnston to steal possession and he was fouled from behind by Neil McGee, who was subsequently black carded, and replaced by his brother Eamon for his first taste of competitive action in 2016.

Donal O'Hare took responsibility for the spot-kick and he went for power, but Boyle read his intentions and pulled off a fantastic save to his left.

Donegal failed to clear the danger and McConville pointed moments later, but that would be Down's last score of the half.

The remaining fifteen minutes of the first half belonged to Michael Murphy.

The Donegal captain was flawless with four placed balls, including a majestic sideline kick from an incredibly challenging position.

McBrearty also registered a free and Donegal went to the dressing rooms with a six-point advantage.

O'Hare opened the scoring after the restart with a free, but Eamonn Burns' team were second best and two goals in three minutes killed the game as a contest.

Ryan McHugh started his darting run 60 metres from goal and he knifed through the middle before offloading to Ciaran Thompson. The young Naomh Conaill clubman could have elected to shoot himself but he laid off to McHugh who

palmed to the net.

Thompson was again to the fore in the 43rd minute, when he drove a lofted pass in towards Patrick McBrearty.

The Kilcar clubman held Darren O'Hagan off before catching the ball and drilling it low into the net.

O'Hare landed three more frees in an eight-minute spell for Down, but Donegal were comfortable and Frank McGlynn kept them ticking over, before lively substitute Leo McLoone grabbed two quickfire scores.

Donegal moved the ball around slickly in the second half and they hit the net for a third time with eleven minutes remaining.

Patrick McBrearty played the ball across to Martin O'Reilly, who passed inside to Ryan McHugh, who was on hand to palm home.

Murphy helped himself to two more frees late on, and there were loud cheers from the Donegal followers in attendance as Neil Gallagher entered the fray, and Rory Kavanagh was also introduced for his first performance since 2014 in a Donegal shirt.

O'Hare was shown a straight red card late on, after tangling with Eamon McGee, who became the third Gaoth Dobhair man after his brother Neil and Michael Carroll to get black cards on the night.

Donegal had used all their subs at that point, so McGee couldn't be replaced, and they actually finished the game with 13 players after Eoin McHugh went off injured.

However, there was still time for

another score with Patrick McBrearty bringing his individual tally to 1-3.

It was a good outing for Donegal and puts them well on their way to retaining their Division 1 status, but they won't be getting carried away with a victory over an awful Down side.

DOWN: Stephen Kane; Darren O'Hagan, Gerard McGovern, Malachy Magee; Michael Hughes, Conaill McGovern (0-1), Ryan Boyle; Peter Turley, Henry Brown; Joe Murphy, Mark Poland, Kevin McKernan; Ryan Johnston, Arthur McConville (0-2,1f), Donal O'Hare (0-4, 4fs). Subs: Connaire Harrison for Johnston (30 mins), Darragh O'Hanlon for Murphy (30 mins Black Card), Niall Madine for McConville (39 mins), Mark McKay for Turley (48 mins), Sean Dornan for Poland (56 mins), Aidan Carr for C.McGovern (57 mins Black Card).

DONEGAL: Peter Boyle; Eamonn Doherty, Neil McGee, Paddy McGrath; Martin O'Reilly, Ryan McHugh (2-0), Anthony Thompson; Michael Murphy (0-8, 7fs, 1 sideline), Ciaran Thompson (0-1); Michael Carroll, Frank McGlynn (0-1), Eoin McHugh; Patrick McBrearty (1-3, 1f), Hugh McFadden, Odhrán MacNiallais. Subs: Eamon McGee for N.McGee (20 mins Black Card), Leo McLoone (0-2) for Carroll (45 mins Black Card), Stephen McBrearty for MacNiallais (53 mins), Neil Gallagher for C.Thompson (59 mins), Rory Kavanagh for O'Reilly (62 mins), Caolan McGonagle for R.McHugh (64 mins).

Referee: David Gough (Meath).

DONEGAL PLAYER RATINGS

RYAN MCHUGH: McHugh was on song on Saturday night, and Down had great difficulty in stopping him. He carried the ball very well and scored two goals. Down playmaker Mark Poland spent the majority of his game, tracking McHugh as opposed to dictating affairs for his team. 8.5

PATRICK MCBREARTY: Down decided to leave Darren O'Hagan one-on-one with McBrearty at times, and that was a disastrous call. The Kilcar man was much too powerful for his opponent and he scored 1-3 in a fine showing. 8.5

EIIN MCHUGH: This was Eoin McHugh's best performance since he joined the senior team. His pace gave Michael Hughes a torrid time and he won a number of frees. He did make a few errors, but he injects much needed speed into the team. 8

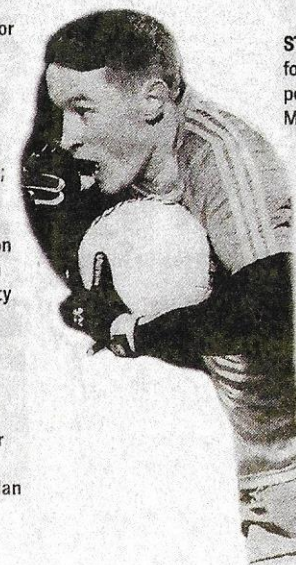
STEPHEN MCBREARTY: McBrearty went on at right half-forward and while he didn't see a lot of the ball, he used possession well when it came his way, and won a free which Murphy scored. 7

WITH RYAN FERRY IN NEWRY

MAN OF THE MATCH

(Michael Murphy)

Donegal had a number of good performers including Ryan McHugh, Ciaran Thompson, and Patrick McBrearty. However, Michael Murphy's exemplary free-taking in the first half when he scored six placed balls won the contest for Donegal, and he continued to dominate in the second half.



Donegal's Eoin McHugh gets away

ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, DIVISION ONE: Round 2

Mac Niallais magnificent as Donegal brush Cork aside



Peter Campbell
in Ballyshannon

Donegal stay top of the Division One table after another very impressive display against Cork in Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon.

**Donegal.....2-14
Cork.....1-7**

Apart from a brief period when they hit 1-3 at the start of the second quarter, Cork were never in this contest, played in driving rain, but on a pitch that held up well.

After their big win in the opening game against Down, Donegal were just as impressive with some outstanding scores, especially from Odhran MacNiallais and Patrick McBrearty. But there was also a great workrate throughout the field, led by Paddy McGrath and Neil McGee from the back with Eoin McHugh again showing a remarkable ability to create havoc while Martin O'Reilly was also lively. Captain Michael Murphy, in a roving role, put in another great shift.

VERY SHARP

Donegal were very sharp in the opening half and led by 1-4 to 0-0 after 15 minutes. Cork did have a good period thereafter, but at half-time Donegal had established a six point advantage, 1-9 to 1-3.

Patrick McBrearty, Ciaran Thompson and Michael Murphy from a 50m free had the opening points. The quality of the scores were impressive.

The first goal of the game came on 14 minutes when Martin O'Reilly combined with Eoin McHugh to cut through the middle and leave Brendan O'Connell helpless in the Cork goal as he found the corner. It was a thing of beauty with McHugh's return pass excellent as O'Reilly hadn't to break stride as he cut through.

Anthony Thompson added a quick point but Thompson's opponent, Donal Og Hodnett was central to a Cork comeback that saw them reduce the margin to a point, 1-4 to 1-3 by the 23rd minute. The points came from three Daniel Goulding frees, two of them for fouls on Hodnett, while the half-forward was on the end of a good move to fire past Peter Boyle in the Donegal goal.

It seemed as if all the good Donegal work had been for nothing, but they quickly regained composure and took control again in the

final ten minutes of the half with five unanswered points, two of them wonder scores by Patrick McBrearty and Odhran MacNiallais, finding the range from distance. Anthony Thompson chipped in with his second point from play in the half.

Cork's frustration was underlined in the final minute of the half when Paul Kerrigan was fouled but he opted to go for goal but his weakly hit shot was easily saved.

Donegal had Ciaran Thompson black carded within 90 seconds of the restart (and on reviewing on TV it looked extremely harsh) but that didn't hold Donegal back as they continued to find the range with man of the match Odhran MacNiallais involved in much of their good work. MacNiallais hit two points and was then on the end of a glorious move involving the McHughs and Neil McGee to fire home the second goal on 53 minutes.

That goal put Donegal into a 2-13 to 1-3 lead and there were 62 minutes on the clock before Cork got their first point of the second half, a Daniel Goulding score, which was their first in 40 minutes.

Before the end Goulding added two more while Patrick McBrearty was almost in for a third goal, his drive just clipping the crossbar on the way over.

Peter Boyle was commanding in

punching clear when Cork threatened but overall this was a poor Cork display.

But take nothing away from Donegal, they again were up for the contest and their handling and scoretaking was equally as good as in their opening win in Newry the previous weekend.

DONEGAL: Peter Boyle; Eamonn Doherty, Neil McGee, Eamon McGee; Paddy McGrath; Ryan McHugh, Anthony Thompson (0-02); Odhran MacNiallais (1-04), Hugh McFadden; Eoin McHugh, Frank McGlynn (0-01), Ciaran Thompson (0-01); Patrick McBrearty (0-04, 2f), Michael Murphy (0-01, f), Martin O'Reilly (1-01). Subs., Rory Kavanagh for C Thompson, beard 37; Leo McLoone for O'Reilly 53; Martin McElhinney for N McGee 55; Eoghan Ban Gallagher for E Doherty 58; Neil Gallagher for H McFadden 63; Michael Carroll for E McHugh 64.

RYAN MCHUGH: A quieter week this week for McHugh, but he still contributed. 7

EOIN MCHUGH: Another good display from the Kilcar man. His all-round game is good and he had another great block at the start of the game. 7.5

PATRICK MCBREARTY: Marked by three at times, McBrearty had a very good game and took some great scores. Could have had a goal near the end. 8

CORK: Brendan O'Connell; Colm O'Driscoll, Jamie O'Sullivan, Kevin Crowley; Tomas Clancy, Brian O'Driscoll (0-01), Ruairi Deane; Ian Maguire, Mark Collins (0-01); Andrew O'Sullivan, Paul Kerrigan, Donal Og Hodnett (1-00); Daniel Goulding (0-5, 3f), Peter Kelleher, Brian Hurley. Subs., Donncha O'Connor for Deane 49; Fintan Gould for Maguire 53; Kevin O'Hanlon for Hodnett 55; Colm O'Neill for Hurley 63; Dan MacEoin for Goulding 68.

REFEREE: Joe McQuillan (Cavan)



Donegal show character to get better of Mayo

DONEGAL DEMOCRAT www.donegaldemocrat.com Monday, February 29, 2016

ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
ROUND 3



Donegal maintained their good start to the new season with a third straight win in yesterday's victory over Mayo in Sean Mac-Cumhail Park.

Donegal 1-14
Mayo 1-12

Just two points separated the sides at the finish in a cracking game played on a beautiful dry crisp day and before one of the biggest crowds seen in Ballybofey for many's the long year.

The official attendance was given as 11,000 and the large Donegal support went home happy after seeing their favourites with the two precious league points after been put to the pin of their collar by the Conacht champions.

This was a most encouraging performance against a top side after their facile wins over Down and Cork in the opening two games. The win moves Donegal to six points and almost virtually assured of their top flight status again next year.

Mayo, who lost their opening two games but had not lost to Donegal since the 2012 All-Ireland final, came to Ballybofey intent on of

maintaining their recent good record against their opponents.

They certainly began with great intent and really pinned Donegal back in their own half early on and had three points to Donegal's one on the board inside eight minutes.

Evan Regan punished Donegal with two early close-in frees following fouls on Kevin McLoughlin and Aidan O'Shea.

McLoughlin was one of two changes Mayo made from the team announced earlier in the week. He replaced Jason Doherty in the attack. The other Mayo change saw All-Ireland minor winner, Michael Hall, replace Mickey Sweeney at corner-forward.

Donegal manager Rory Gallagher also made two changes from the team in the programme. Rory Kavanagh made his first start since the 2014 All-Ireland final defeat to Kerry.

The St Eunan's man lined up at midfield alongside Michael Murphy.

Kavanagh replaced Anthony Thompson. Gaoth Dobhair teenager Michael Carroll was the other Donegal alteration, replacing the injured Ciaran Thompson in the half-forward line.

Odhran MacNiallais, playing in an advanced role, opened Donegal's account seven minutes into the game.

But with Mayo continuing to dominate around the middle of the park, especially in broken play, Aidan O'Shea landed Mayo's third point from way out on the left for a



super score.

Michael Murphy responded for Donegal with the first of his five for the afternoon before Shane Nally, who exploited an opening on the right side of the Donegal defence, edged Mayo into a 0-4 to 0-2 lead by the end of the first quarter hour.

But skipper Murphy and Kavanagh responded with Kavanagh's 20 minute strike tying up the game for the first time.

Martin McElhinney replaced Michael Carroll and with his first touch the St. Michael's man blazed wide with only Robert Hennelly to beat after being sent through by superb cross field pass from Ryan McHugh.

The sides were level three times in the closing action packed ten minutes with Hennelly, and McBrearty and Lee Keegan and Ryan McHugh and Regan and Murphy trading points, before Brendan Harrison edged Mayo ahead in injury time, 0-8 to 0-7.

Ryan McHugh, superb at wing back, tied up the game on 0-8 each inside 20 seconds of the restart..

Regan and McBrearty traded points before MacNiallais with a trade mark strike kicked Donegal into the lead for the first time to lead

0-10 to 0-9 by the 40th minute.

But Donegal were reeling five minutes later when Diarmaid O'Connor converted from the penalty spot after Regan was tripped by Peter Boyle.

The game got scrappy for a period. Neil Gallagher replaced Hugh McFadden after the Killybegs man had been booked. The big Glenswilly man only lasted a minute before he was black carded for a trip on a Mayo player.

Murphy steadied the Donegal ship with a '45' to reduce the margin to two once more, 1-10 to 0-11. And with the intensity levels up a notch McBrearty from a 40 metre free made it a point game with a little over a quarter of an hour remaining.

And with Donegal back in the groove, the move of the match led to the Donegal goal. Anthony Thompson turned over Mayo just inside his own half before quickly transferring to Christy Toye, in the middle of the field. Toye carried before laying off to Kavanagh who in turn found the inrushing Leo McLoone, who carried and steadied before smashing past Hennelly for a super goal and the lead once more for Donegal.

Donegal leading 1-12 to 1-10 were not going to be caught as Murphy and McBrearty knocked over clinching points with Hennelly from a '45' and Seamus O'Shea from play

responding for the men from the west.

After a slow start and being under siege early one, Donegal regrouped well to deservedly win against a Mayo side that were up for a battle.

Donegal head to Kerry next weekend with full points from their three games and with an eye on a place in a league semi-final at least were much within their grasp

Donegal: P Boyle; E McGee, N McGee, P McGrath; R McHugh (0-2), F McGlynn, E Doherty; O MacNiallais (0-2), H McFadden; R Kavanagh (0-1), M Carroll, E McHugh; P McBrearty (0-4,3f), M Murphy (0-5,3f,45), M O'Reilly. Subs., M McElhinney for Carroll 18; A Thompson for E Doherty ht; N Gallagher for H McFadden 47; C Toye for Gallagher, beard 49; Leo McLoone (1-0) for E McGee 51; Caolan Ward for M O'Reilly 69

Mayo: R Hennelly (0-2,f,45); B Harrison (0-1), G Cafferkey, K Higgins; L Keegan (0-1), C Boyle, S Nally (0-1); T Parsons, J Gibbons; D O'Connor (1-0, pen), A O'Shea (0-1), C O'Shea; E Regan (0-4,4f), K McLoughlin, M Hall. Subs., C Loftus (0-1) for Higgins 21; Andy Moran for E Regan 50; Donal Vaughan for S Nally 53; Seamus O'Shea (0-1) for Gibbons 63; Jason Doherty for D O'Connor 69.

Referee: B Cassidy (Derry).

First league defeat as Donegal lose out to Kerry

DIVISION 1 - ROUND 4

www.donegaldemocrat.com Monday, March 7, 2016

KERRY	1-13
DONEGAL	1-8

By **PETER CAMPBELL**
 e-mail: Sport@donegaldemocrat.com
 Twitter: @dgdemocrat

Donegal's wait for a league win in Kerry goes on as they went down by five points in a feisty affair in Austin Stack Park, Tralee yesterday.

The game was not for the faint hearted with two red cards in the opening half; two black cards within 30 seconds for Kerry and a number of unseemly melees.

The first of these came about after a hop ball after six minutes with players rolling around on the ground.

Then away from that action, a red card was shown to Kerry full-forward Alan Fitzgerald after a tussle with Neil McGee. The Donegal full-back had to go off with a suspected broken nose but returned after half-time.

The second red came after another melee on 20 minutes which ended with Leo McLoone being given his marching orders. At the same time Michael Murphy was dragged to the ground without any Kerry player being punished.

It was that sort of game, and referee Eddie Kinsella had plenty on his plate.

The game was not helped also by

a gale force breeze which Kerry had at their backs in the opening half. They were in front after a minute when Donnchadh Walsh worked his way through to fist the opening point.

Bryan Sheehan, one of the Kerry players lucky to stay on the field after the melees, had a second point from a '45' before Michael Murphy pointed after Leo McLoone was fouled.

Donnchadh Walsh fisted a second point but Murphy replied after a foul on Ryan McHugh.

Kerry then moved five clear with Bryan Sheehan showing his full array of place kicking, finding the range from all distances to extend the lead to 0-7 to 0-2 by the 28th minute.

Double black card

There was a double black card for Kerry on 25 minutes, Shane Enright and Denis Daly sent to the bench within seconds of each other; Enright for a tackle on the 45m line while Daly was reported for a third man tackle on Ryan McHugh, who was trying to make a run.

Donegal hit back with a Patrick McBrearty point from a free and they were unlucky to see the ball come back off an upright on two occasions from Rory Kavanagh and Hugh McFadden.

HALF-TIME: DONEGAL 0-3, KERRY 0-7.

Donegal introduced Neil Gallagher and Martin McElhinney at half-

time and they had a blistering opening to the second half hitting four points inside seven minutes to level matters at 0-7 each.

It started with Patrick McBrearty taking a long delivery from Neil Gallagher to fire towards goal but his effort was deflected for a '45'. Michael Murphy converted the '45' and then Patrick McBrearty (free), Neil Gallagher and McBrearty again from a free, pointing.

But they were not able to push on and they were cut open for the Kerry goal on 56 minutes. A quick free found Kieran Donaghy in space and he found Peter Crowley driving through to fire past Peter Boyle.

Three points

Kerry, with the initiative, hit the next three points from two Sheehan frees and another fisted effort from Donnchadh Walsh to open the gap to 1-10 to 0-7.

Donegal were given hope again when an Eoin McHugh sideline was fielded by Michael Murphy, who turned and drove to the roof of the net.

Murphy added a free after Christy Toye was fouled on 60 minutes but that was to be their last score.

In the final minutes Kerry added further points from Sheehan (free), another fisted point from Barry John Keane and their only score from play from Colm 'Gooch' Cooper in the 72nd minute.

Overall, Kerry were the better side, but Donegal had a brief chance



Neil McGee of Donegal is helped from the action after suffering a
 Photo: ©INPHO/Cathal Noonan

when they got level, but then their discipline was suspect as they stood too close to frees, which were moved on. This was a feature of the game, not just in the second half.

The defeat, their first of the cam-

paign, will give them plenty to ponder on before the visit of high flying Roscommon on Sunday next.

Roscommon kept their excellent run of results going yesterday with a home victory over Down.

Dublin are now the only side in Division One with a 100 per cent record when they came from behind to beat Cork on Saturday night in Croke Park.

Donegal: Peter Boyle; Eamonn Doherty, Neil McGee, Paddy McGrath; Eoghan Ban Gallagher, Ryan McHugh, Anthony Thompson; Rory Kavanagh, Michael Murphy (1-4,3f,45); Leo McLoone, Hugh McFadden, Eoin McHugh; Patrick McBrearty (0-3,2f), Odhran MacNi-allais, Martin O'Reilly. Subs., Neil Gallagher (0-1) for H McFadden; Martin McElhinney for Doherty, both ht; Christy Toye for Thompson 54.

Kerry: Brian Kelly; Marc O Se Mark Griffin, Shane Enright; Peter Crowley (1-0), Aidan O'Mahony, Fionn Fitzgerald; Kieran Donaghy, Bryan Sheehan (0-8,7f,45); Denis Daly, Paul Murphy, Donnchadh Walsh (0-3); Darran O'Sullivan, Alan Fitzgerald, Stephen O'Brien. Subs., Colm Coopere (0-1) for Daly; Padraig O'Connor for Enright, both black cards 27; Johnny Buckley for Donaghy; Barry John Keane (0-1) for O'Brien, both 58; Brendan O'Sullivan for Crowley 67; Aidan Walsh for D O'Sullivan 70. Referee: Eddie Kinsella (Laois)

Irrepressible Roscommon underline status as a team going places quickly

McStay delighted team can look forward to more top flight football next season

Margin of victory could have been wider but for fine saves by Boyle

Roscommon 1-19
Donegal 0-17



Keith Duggan
At O'Donnell Park

The Rossies are turning into a thrilling flying column of a football team. After their opening day defeat – to Monaghan in a Kiltoom tornado – they have gone to Kerry, Cork and now Donegal and didn't so much make raids as proclamations.

They look like a side that belongs in elite company.

True, Donegal have a weirdly miserable record in Letterkenny with just two wins in 13 matches now. But they aren't accustomed to being bossed around in their own back yard and that is what happened here. A total of 1-19 is a handsome score line to post in March. And save for two fine, reflex saves by Peter Boyle, the Donegal defence would have been thoroughly ransacked.

There is a wonderful innocence about this Roscommon team: they haven't been afraid to celebrate these landmark league wins or to show it means something. They are a young team on the up.

"Today is great because we are absolutely nailed-on Division One next year, which is a big thing for us, a big target," enthused Kevin McStay. It was notable that McStay and Liam McHale took to the stands armed with note books and Cornettos, leaving Fergal O'Donnell to patrol the sideline.

"We'll get another seven games next year into these young boys. It's great: we played quite well and there's no denying it. We were dreaming about beating Donegal up in Donegal and now we've done it. Coming into the game, and I'll be dead on honest, we'd have been very realistic that we could have got a scotching today if we were a little bit off."

Free-running
From minute one, the home team looked startled by the pace, invention and confidence of the Roscommon attack. Captain Ciaran Murtagh set the tone by shaking off Ryan McHugh with an early shoulder to supply the tree-running Niall Daly with his first point.

They pressed the Donegal kick-out and crowded their 45 metre line. They rotated their inside forwards, with big Senan Kilbride the go-to man. They had willing support runners in Sean McDermott and Niall McInerney. They had their full-

back, Neil Collins, shadow Michael Murphy all over the pitch. They confined to Donegal to just one score from play. They finished the half with just two wides.

The second of those stunned the home crowd as Niall Daly ballooned wide with the Donegal goal at his mercy. Daly had tortured Donegal in the first half. He was a late replacement

“We were dreaming about beating Donegal and now we've done it”

for Ian Kilbride and promptly gave the selectors something to think about, popping up every where and firing three nifty points.

"They got off to a blistering start and we never looked like pegging it back," acknowledged Rory Gallagher.

"We rode our luck for a long while and we were lucky to be only five points down at half-time."

Donegal fell into a 0-13 to 0-6 hole early in the second half before they finally roused them-

selves. The introduction of Christy Toye gave them central strength and directness and for 10 minutes, Murphy absolutely lorded it over the crowd.

It is a frustration to see him trail behind the play so much when he terrifies defences whenever he is on the ball. He contested three balls as a conventional edge-of-square full-forward. The result was 0-2 and a half-pass away from a goal chance. Roscommon were outscored 0-6 to 0-2 in 14 minutes, with the hard-running Eoin McHugh finding gaps in the visitors defence.

Silly tackles

Two incidents – Odhran MacNiallas's dismissal for two silly tackles and Cathal Cregg's brilliant 58th minute goal on the counter-attack – ended Donegal's chances.

"We were well and truly beaten," said Gallagher. "We were beaten by the better, hungrier team. It was too open for our liking. We responded well in the second half and we kept at it. The sending off was a critical moment, but there was no denying that Roscommon were much sharper. It was a lethargic display against a very hun-

Division 1

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Dublin	5	5	0	0	10
Roscommon	5	4	0	1	8
Kerry	5	3	0	2	6
Donegal	5	3	0	2	6
Cork	5	2	0	3	4
Monaghan	5	2	0	3	4
Mayo	5	1	0	4	2
Down	5	0	0	5	0

gry team. We got to grips with it well at the start of the second half, but us losing the man made it easy for them. Look, they were just sharper and they were just hungrier."

Few teams can declare themselves safe as the Allianz league enters its last phase. Roscommon can. If summer is as smooth, the Primrose County will be in dreamland.

ROSCOMMON: G Claffey, S McDermott, N Collins, N McInerney, R Stack, S Purcell, D Murray; **C Cregg (0-5, three frees), N Daly (0-3); C Daly (0-1), C Murtagh (0-6, five frees), C Devaney (0-1);** C Connolly, S Kilbride, **C Cregg (1-2).** Subs: N Kilroy for C Daly (36 mins, bc); **E Smith (0-1)** for C Connolly (52 mins); C Compton for N Daly (56 mins); J McManus for R Stack (66 mins).
DONEGAL: P Boyle; P McGrath, E McGee, A Thompson; E Doherty, **R McHugh (0-1), E Gallagher, R Kavanagh, N Gallagher; M Murphy (0-7, four frees), M O'Reilly, M McElhinney, O MacNiallais (0-1), E McHugh (0-1), P McBrearty (0-6, frees).** Subs: M McHugh for A Thompson (22 mins); K Lacey for E McGee (32 mins); **C Toye (0-1)** for N Gallagher (half-time); S McBrearty for M McElhinney (50 mins); N Gallagher for E Gallagher (65 mins).
Referee: P Hughes (Armagh).

Donegal suffocate the life out of Easter as traditionalists choke on their eggs

McManamon provides the guile as patient Dublin pass Donegal test

Champions finally wear the visitors's defensive set-up down in the second half

McMahon's well-worked late goal effectively ends Donegal's resistance

Dublin	1-10
Donegal	0-7



Seán Moran
at Croke Park

There were further signs at Croke Park on Saturday that Dublin footballers are becoming more resistant to the tactics of ultra-defence. They certainly got a strong inoculation from Donegal, who reprised the ap-

proach of the 2011 All-Ireland semi-final by keeping virtually everyone behind the ball in front of a crowd of 23,340.

So pronounced was this pattern that at one stage 29 players were within one of the 45s and just before half-time Ryan McHugh sprang onto a turnover ball and streaked away only to find none of his team-mates were within 50 metres of him.

Impressive game

Dublin recorded a sixth win in as many outings despite resting such important front-liners as Diarmuid Connolly, Cian O'Sullivan and captain Stephen Cluxton, whose understudy Michael Savage had an impressive game, directing his kick-outs with assurance and producing a fingertip save to deny Eoin McHugh a second-minute goal.

Dublin won because they showed the patience necessary to absorb Donegal's best shots and create enough space for scores. They led narrowly ahead at the break having played into a strong wind, and ultimately wore the opposition down in a final half-hour that saw the holders outscore the visitors by 1-5 to 0-1.

Dublin manager Jim Gavin was asked did he think it had been entertaining viewing.

"No. I wouldn't say it's a pretty game to watch at all," he said. "It's not the way we play the game, not by choice. There is no right and wrong way to play Gaelic football. Teams decide on it themselves. We've a particular way of playing football in Dublin. It's expressive and creative..."

His Donegal counterpart Rory Gallagher denied that they had deliberately set out to turn the match into a crowd scene with a lavish budget.

"If defenders are pushing up - we don't set out to have 15 back. Yes we'd a few men back and Patrick and Leo were inside and ended up chasing their own men back. Dublin committed 15 into our half and it's not

as if we're going to leave their men free."

The match turned away from Donegal in the 51st minute when Michael Murphy was sent off for a second yellow card after a sliding tackle on Ciarán Kilkenny. James McCarthy joined him for his role in the melee that followed.

Video of the Dublin player's hand making contact with the eye area of Martin McElhinney provided the main talking point although Murphy was also seen making contact with a lower

“ There is no right or wrong way to play Gaelic football. Teams decide on it

but also sensitive area of McCarthy's anatomy in the preceding incident.

Dublin will anxiously await the report of referee Conor Lane to see if McCarthy received his second yellow for the McElhinney incident - in which case it will be deemed to have been dealt with - or if Croke Park's CCCC decide the matter

warrants further investigation.

"We need to have a look on tape," said Gavin when asked about the sending-off.

Gallagher said that there had been no reaction to the incident in the Donegal dressing-room. "I didn't see anything and none of our players are complaining about anything. Definitely not."

McCarthy has been playing well this season but Donegal lost more in the dismissals, losing their talisman Murphy.

Familiar speed

As the play loosened, Dublin hit their stride. Man of the Match Kevin McManamon whose familiar speed across the turf was complemented by quick thinking, excellent decision making and accurate shooting - he scored 0-3 from play and provided assists for 1-2, including a perfect fist pass for Philip McMahon to run onto and maintain his status as the game's most prolific corner back.

That 66th-minute goal effectively ended the contest, as Donegal had struggled despite Patrick McBrearty's efforts and the relentless running of Ryan McHugh to chase the three-point leads that Dublin

■ **Dublin's James McCarthy clashes with Donegal's Martin McElhinney during the Allianz League Division One game at Croke Park.** PHOTOGRAPH: DONALL FARMER/INPHO

had twice built.

Dublin can be pleased with performances of Brian Fenton at centrefield, who broke through to point a definite goal chance in the 55th minute, and Ciarán Kilkenny who played an energetic role at both ends in his side's cause.

DUBLIN: M Savage, P McMahon (1-0), J Cooper, D Byrne, J McCarthy, E Lowndes, J Small; B Fenton (0-1), D Bastick (capt), P Flynn, K McManamon (0-3), C Kilkenny (0-1); C Costello (0-3, two frees), P Andrews (0-1), B Brogan. **Subs:** D Rock (0-1) for Brogan (41 mins), E O'Conghaile for Bastick (45 mins), SB Carthy for Lowndes (53 mins), M Fitzsimons for Small (53 mins), T Brady for Costello (58 mins), D Daly for McManamon (70 mins). **DONEGAL:** MA McGinley, P McGrath, E McGee (0-1), C Gillespie, M O'Reilly, R McHugh, A Thompson; M Murphy (capt; 0-1), O Mac Niallais (0-1), R Kavanagh (0-1), K Lacey, E McHugh, P McBrearty (0-3, one free), L McLoone, H McFadden; **Subs:** M McHugh for McGrath (41 mins), M McElhinney for McLoone (45 mins), EB Gallagher for Thompson (59 mins), C Tovey for H McFadden (59 mins), C McFadden for Lacey (65 mins), M Carroll for Kavanagh (73 mins). **Referee:** C Lane (Cork).

ALLIANZ NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION ONE - ROUND 7

DEFEAT, BUT DONEGAL STILL MAKE SEMI-FINAL



Donegal suffered their fourth win on the trot but remarkably are still in the semi-final of the Allianz League Division One.

Monaghan 1-10
Donegal 1-9

It took an injury time point from corner-back Colin Walshe to save Monaghan's Division One status in a competitive game in Castleblayney.

Monaghan looked at sea in the first half but they found their way in the final quarter to get the much-needed victory.

There was plenty of tension at the end of the game as the sides were level with time up. However, the Farney men showed the greater will to win. Donegal lost two players in added time to black cards.

In an open first half, Donegal were completely on top early on and by the 19th minute, led by 1-4 to 0-0.

Michael Murphy had Donegal on the board inside a minute and the

McHugh cousins added two more as Monaghan were really struggling.

A free won and converted by Patrick McBrearty had Donegal in control and then Donegal opened up the Monaghan defence for Martin McElhinney to fire Donegal seven points clear on 19 minutes. McElhinney had combined with Leo McLoone and the St. Michael's man finished in style.

But Monaghan suddenly found their shooting boots and Dermot Malone found a gap in the Donegal defence to set up Daniel McKenna. His first effort was stopped but he picked up the rebound to fire to the net.

McKenna added a point immediately and even though Michael Murphy found the range from a free, Darren Hughes and Conor McManus with two, cut the gap to two points as half-time approached.

Donegal finished the half with a well worked point, Patrick McBrearty at the end of the move to leave Donegal 1-7 to 1-4 in front at the break.

The second half was more open as both sides found the going difficult. Once again it was Conor McManus who got Monaghan back in the game with a free after just 37 seconds.

Donegal had a goal chance on 39



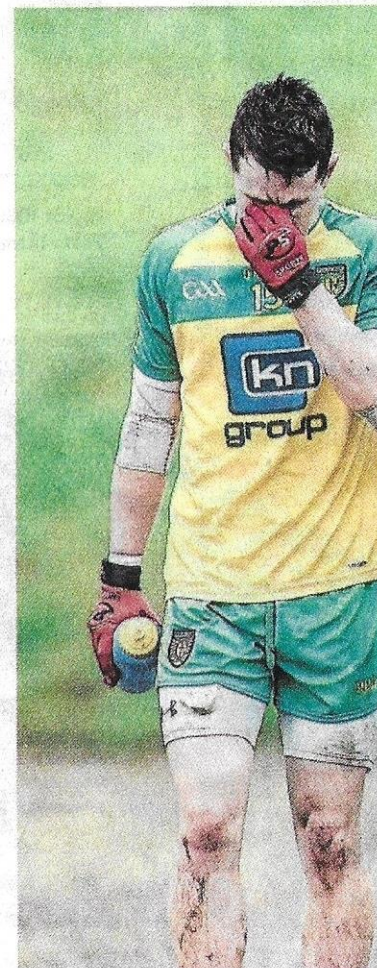
minutes as Odhran MacNiallais found Patrick McBrearty with a cross-field ball.

McBrearty won the ball well and turned his man but Ryan Wylie made a great block as McBrearty went for goal with his right.

Michael Murphy converted a '45' on 45 minutes, while McManus replied from a free. Anthony Thompson tore forward to hit a good Donegal point to put them three clear again on 54 minutes, but they were not to raise another flag and that was the reason they didn't get anything from the match.

Monaghan, with the crowd getting behind them, came forward in droves and thanks to some favourable refereeing decisions, Ryan McAnespie and two Conor McManus frees had them level with five minutes of normal time left.

With both sides out on their feet, Donegal lost Neil McGee to a harsh black card as the game entered added time. Kieran Hughes was wide from the free, but then with four of the five added minutes played, Colin Walshe stole up along the sideline to fire over what proved to be a very valuable winner for Monaghan to keep them in Division One for next season.



Eoin McHugh

Credit ©INPHO/Andrew Paton

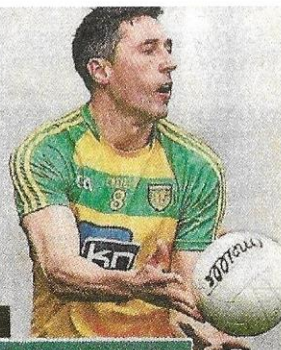
For Donegal, there will be plenty to ponder, having led by seven points at one stage in the first half, but they will be happy with some aspects of the performance.

Monaghan: Rory Beggan; Colin Walshe (0-01), Drew Wylie, Ryan Wylie; Dessie Mone, Pinta Kelly, Karl O'Connell; Neil McAdam, Darren Hughes (0-01); Vinny Corey, Dermot Malone, Kieran Hughes; Ryan McAnespie (0-01), Daniel McKenna (1-01), Conor McManus (0-06,5f). Subs: Thomas Kerr for Mone 47; Owen Duffy for Malone 53; Conor McCarthy for McKenna 59

Donegal: Mark Anthony McGinley; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee, Frank McGlynn; Ryan McHugh (0-01), Anthony Thompson (0-01), Eoin McHugh (0-01); Michael Murphy (0-3, 2f, 45), Odhran MacNiallais (0-01); Rory Kavanagh, Leo McLoone, Martin McElhinney (1-00), Hugh McFadden, Patrick McBrearty (0-02,1f), Marty O'Reilly. Subs.: Colm McFadden for E McHugh 53; Eamon McGee for O'Reilly 59; Christy Toye for McLoone 64; Stephen McBrearty for McElhinney 65; Eamonn Doherty for N McGee, beard 70; Mark McHugh for H McFadden beard 74

Referee: Rory Hickey (Clare)

DUBLIN HAVE TOO MUCH FIREPOWER FOR DONEGAL



ALLIANZ NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE SEMI-FINAL



Tom Comack
in Croke Park

Donegal slumped to their fifth straight defeat in a row when going down to Dublin in a one-sided Allianz League semi-final in Croke Park.

Dublin.....1-20
Donegal.....0-13

Ten points separated the sides at the end and the ten point winning margin in no way flattered the reigning league and All-Ireland champions, who were much the better side.

Donegal only played in fits and starts and never really found their rhythm against a Dublin side without Diarmuid Connolly, Michael Darragh Macauley and Kevin McManamon.

Dublin showed two changes from the side named by Jim Gavin. Cian O'Sullivan replaced Eric Lowndes at centre half-back and Paul Mannion replaced Diarmuid Connolly in the forward line

Donegal showed three changes from the team that started against Monaghan in Castleblayney seven days earlier.

Eamonn McGee, Karl Lacey and

Kieran Gillespie came in for Anthony Thompson, Eoin McHugh and Hugh McFadden.

The double champions played into the Davin Stand End and with a strong wind in their backs they started well and with Donegal defending in numbers their patient build up yielded three points to Donegal's one in the opening nine minutes.

Dean Rock, from a close in free; Ciaran Kilkenny and Paddy Andrews, both from play, scored for the All-Ireland champions.

In between the Dubs' two opening strikes Patrick McBrearty, from a 20 metre free after Neil McGee charged up the field and was fouled, hit the Donegal point.

Dean Rock from play after Odhran MacNiallais had snuffed a glorious chance at the other end, made it 0-4 to 0-1 with 11 minutes on the clock.

Donegal were on the back foot at this stage although the defensive system was holding up reasonably and really made the reigning champions work for their scores.

And the small smattering of Donegal supporters in the crowd of 31,324 would have been reasonably happy when Michael Murphy converted twice in quick succession to reduce the gap to one, 0-4 to 0-3, at the end of the first quarter.

The first of those frees from 44 metres off the ground was a super score and the second was from



much closer range, just outside the D.

Rory Kavanagh was winning a lot of ball around the middle and the McGees were making forays forward at every opportunity.

Dublin were moving the ball well and Dean Rock and man of the of the match Ciaran Kilkenny stretched the Dublin lead out to 0-6 to 0-3 before Martin McElhinney with the Donegal score of the day made it a two point game once more with a little over 12 minutes to the break.

McElhinney split the Hill 16 posts after good combination play from Kieran Gillespie, Ryan McHugh and Stephen McBrearty.

But Dublin pulled away again and Rock, Andrews and Kilkenny all hit the target to open up an 0-9 to 0-4 lead with five minutes to go to half-time.

Rory Kavanagh also denied Bernard Brogan what looked like a certain goal during this spell too before Murphy and McBrearty kept the Donegal side of the scoreboard ticking to reduce the margin to three again, 0-9 to 0-6. But before half-time Paul Mannion and James McCarthy popped over two late points to send Dublin in 0-11 to 0-6 up.

The signs were not good but with the wind in their backs in the second period there was some hope held out for a Donegal revival.

But the lights were dimmed on that aspiration inside the opening minutes of the second period when

Bernard Brogan got on the end of a sweeping move to slide the ball under the advancing Mark Anthony McGinley for a the game's only goal and a 1-11 to 0-6 Dublin lead.

Patrick McBrearty pulled a point back before Philly McMahon got forward to score a trademark point.

Dublin were easing through the gears at this stage as they attacked in waves and Mark Anthony McGinley saved well to deflect a Paul Mannion shot on the target out for a 45.

Rock converted the '45' and John Small drove forward to make it 1-14 to 0-7 before McBrearty kicked Donegal's second point of the half on 48 minutes.

Mannion added another Dublin point before Donegal hit three in-a-row two, McBrearty frees and one Murphy free.

But Dublin responded with three of their own on the bounce from Cormac Costelloe, Johnny Cooper and Eric Lowndes to make it 1-18 to 0-11 on the hour mark.

Michael Murphy was uncharacteristically wide from 35 metres before in the closing minutes McBrearty and Brogan traded two points each as the clock ran down on a lopsided second half.

Donegal: Mark Anthony McGinley; Paddy McGrath, Neil McGee; Eamon McGee, Martin O'Reilly, Ryan McHugh, Kieran Gillespie; Michael Murphy, Odhran MacNiallais; Karl Lacey, Leo McLoone, Frank McGlynn; Patrick McBrearty (0-8,5f), Michael Murphy (0-4,4f), Martin McElhinney (0-1) Subs: Stephen McBrearty for M O'Reilly (13); Caolan McGonagle for MacNiallais (50); Colm McFadden for Martin McElhinney (55); Eoghan 'Ban' Gallagher for L McLoone (66); Christy Toye for R Kavanagh (67); Jack O'Brien for Gillespie (70).

Dublin: Stephen Cluxton; Philly McMahon (0-1), Johnny Cooper (0-1), David Byrne; John McCarthy (0-1), Cian O'Sullivan, John Small (0-1); Brian Fenton, Denis Bastick; Paul Flynn, Paddy Andrews (0-2), Ciaran Kilkenny (0-3); Dean Rock (0-5,3f,145), Paul Mannion (0-2) Bernard Brogan (1-2). Subs: Cormac Costelloe (0-1) for P Andrews (44); Eric Lowndes (0-1) for D Bastick (48); Shane B Carthy for P Flynn (50); Kevin O'Brien for J Cooper (61); Shane Carthy for C O'Sullivan (68).

Referee: M Deegan (Laois).