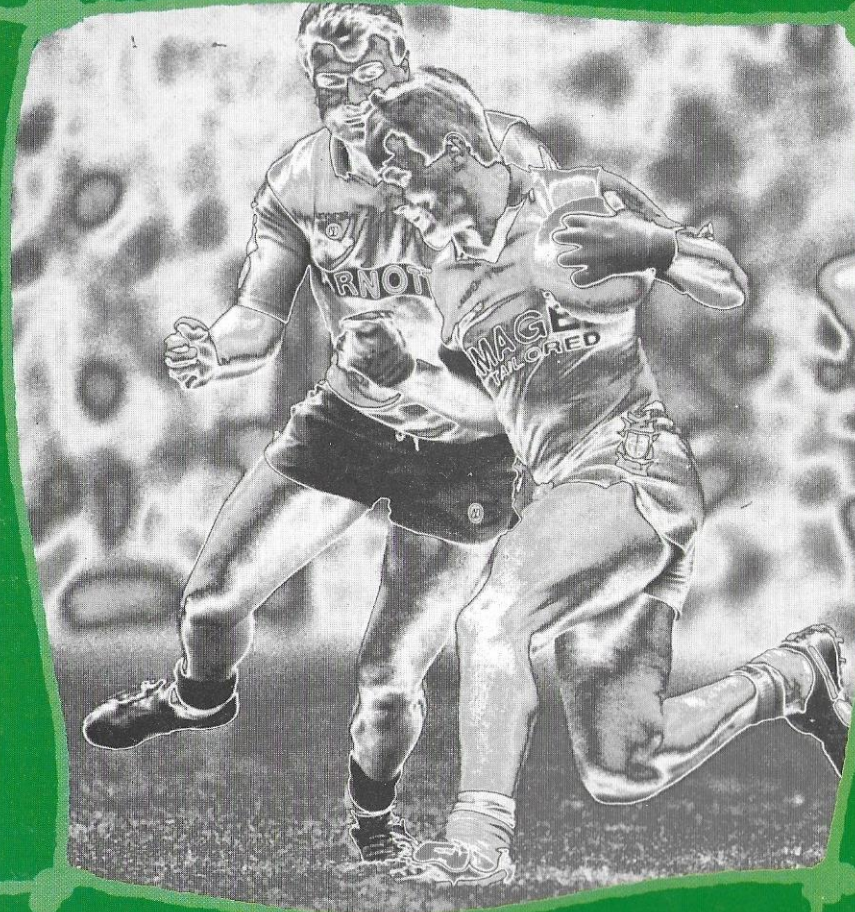


Cumann Lúthchleas Gael



Church & General
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Semi-Finals



30 Aibreán, 1995
PÁIRC AN CHRÓCAIGH

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Clar Oifigiúil

Kevin O'Mahony
Ard Stiúrthóir

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Bank of Ireland wishes all the participating Counties the very best of luck for the 1995 Bank of Ireland Football Championship.

Bank of Ireland



Cumann Lúthchleas Gael



**Church & General
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

Semi Finals

2.00 Doire v Tír Eoghain

Réiteoir: **B. White (Loch Garman)**

3.30 Dún na nGall v Laois

Réiteoir: **P. Russell (Tiobraid Árann)**

Where necessary, replays will be played on 7.5.1995

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Amhrán na bhFiann

Sinne Fianna Fáil,
Atá faoi gheall ag Éirinn,
Buíon dár slua
Thar toinn do ráinig chugainn
Faoi mhóid bheith saor,
Sean-tír ár sinsear feasta
Ní fhágfar faoin tíorán ná faoin tráill.
Anocht a théam sa bhearna baoil
Le gean ar Ghaeil chun báis nó saoil
Le gunna scréach faoi lámhach na bpiléar,
Seo libh canaig amhrán na bhFiann.

Doire v. Tír Eoghain

Brian White (*Loch Garman*)

Brian White is a member of the Ratharogue-Cushinstown club in Wexford. He is a former hurler and footballer and won intermediate medals with his club in both codes.

His refereeing credentials include a Leinster football final, the NFL final

and replay in 1993 between Dublin and Donegal and two All-Ireland Senior Football semi-finals — Cork v. Mayo in 1993 and Cork v. Down last year. He was in charge of the quarter-final meeting of Clare and Donegal at Castlebar two weeks ago.

Dún na nGall v. Laois

Paddy Russell (*Tiobraid Árann*)



The Premier County man is a much travelled referee, not only in this country but abroad. He had charge of the Cork-All Stars game at the Skydome, Toronto, in 1991 and was the man in the middle in the Willie Dowds Cup tie last month in Glasgow, where Donegal beat Dublin. Russell has been refereeing since 1975 and has steadily advanced through the

ranks. He has refereed All-Ireland finals at minor, junior and senior (the Sam Maguire Cup tie of 1990). On St. Patrick's Day he was referee of the club final between Kilmacud Crokes and Bellaghy. His most recent assignment was the quarter-final meeting of Tyrone and Kerry at Croke Park two weeks ago.

Medical/Lost Children

Medical:

Hogan Stand: Upper Hogan, Medical Centre rear of Press Box Area.

Lower Hogan/Nally: Treatment Ambulance rear of Sections G/L.

Canal End: Treatment Ambulance and Medical Centre rear of Terrace.

Hill 16: Treatment Ambulance and Medical Centre rear of Terrace.

Pitch: St. John Ambulance on pitch in front of Nally Stand and on pitch outside dressing room area.

Site Medical Officer: Dr. Stuart in front of Nally Stand.

All Medical Centres are staffed by St. John Ambulance Brigade.

Lost Children:

Upper Hogan at Medical Centre.

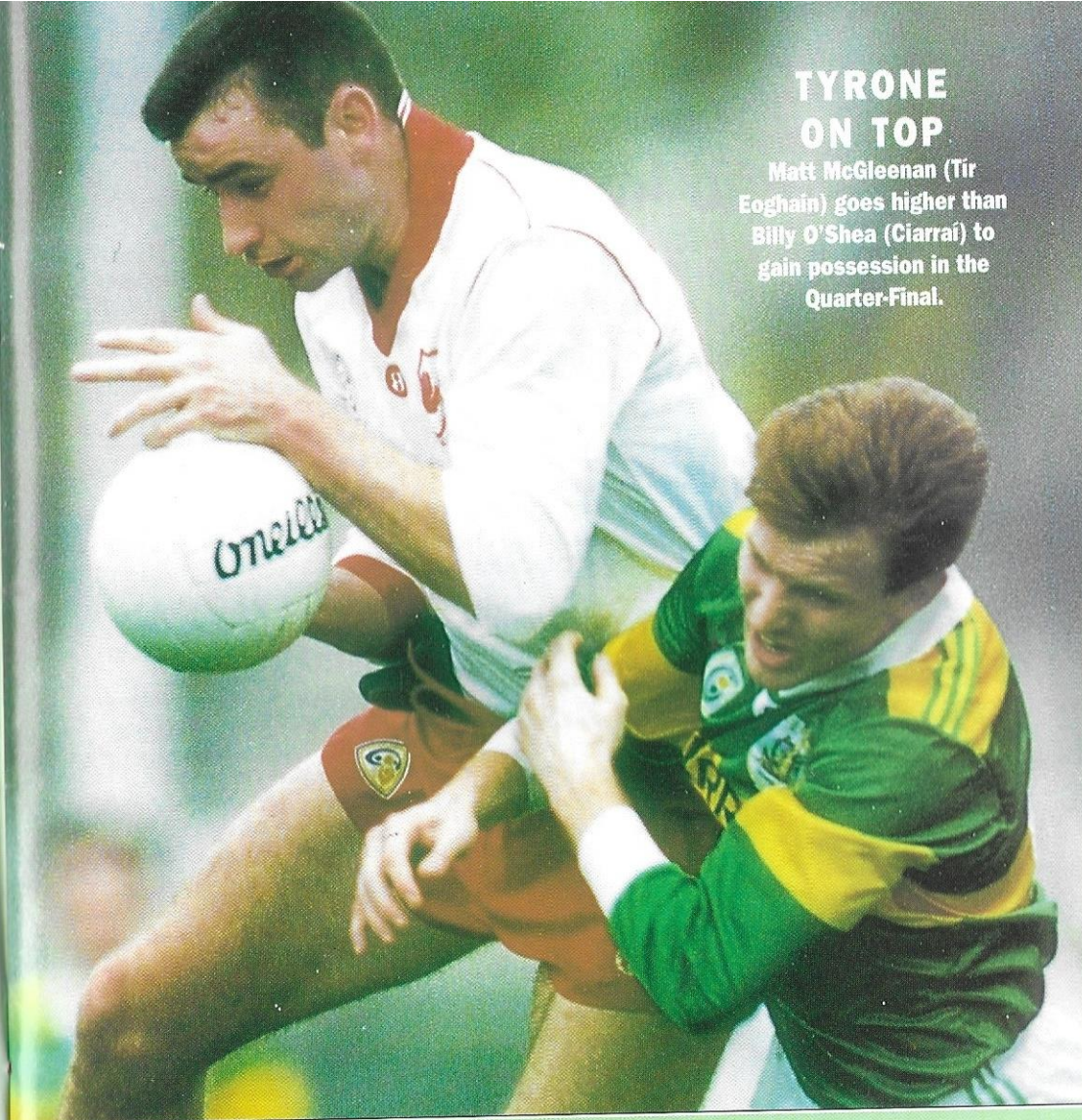
Lower Hogan/Nally at Gift Shop.

Canal Terrace - Medical Centre.

Hill 16 Terrace - Medical Centre.

TYRONE ON TOP

Matt McGleenan (Tír Eoghain) goes higher than Billy O'Shea (Ciarrai) to gain possession in the Quarter-Final.

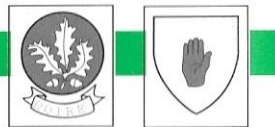


SUPER SUB

The above caption must be one of the most regularly abused terms in sports journalism, but Jim McGuinness of Donegal and Tyrone's Ciaran Loughran must have added a new dimension to the words over the past six months, not necessarily by what they achieved after arriving on the scene of action, but rather because of the frequency with which they replaced injured or fading colleagues in the course of the '94-'95 campaign. The Donegal man came on as a sub in all four of his county's pre-Christmas outings, made the first fifteen for the Laois game as he did for the second clash with Kerry, before dropping back to a full hour on the bench for the Clare game.

The Tyrone 'sub' went several turns better as he entered the fray on no fewer than eight occasions as a substitute which most surely rate him as a genuine super-sub — at least of this season's campaign.

How The Counties Have Fared In The Past Year



May 1994 — April 1995

Doire

1st May — Challenge:
Derry 1-15; Galway 1-15

15th May — Challenge:
Derry 0-23; Leitrim 2-11

29th May — Championship:
Down 1-14; Derry 1-12

1st October — O Fiach Cup:
Derry 2-10; Tyrone 0-8

16th October — League:
Laois 1-17; Derry 0-8

30th October — League:
Donegal 0-15; Derry 2-6

13th November — League:
Derry 1-11; Kerry 2-6

27th November — League:
Derry 0-9; Meath 0-8

12th February — Tournament:
Derry 0-14; Tipperary 2-7

19th February — League:
Derry 1-10; Down 1-7

5th March — League:
Derry 0-10; Kildare 0-9

19th March — League:
Derry 1-9; Dublin 1-9

9th April — Dr McKenna Cup:
Derry 0-14; Antrim 0-3

16th April — League Q/F:
Derry 1-11; Cavan 0-11

23rd April — Dr McKenna Cup:
Derry 1-13; Tyrone 1-11

Played 15; Won 10;
Drew 2; Lost 3
For: 11-175 (208 pts);
Against: 12-151 (187 pts)
Average per game:
13.86 pts to 12.46 pts.

Tír Eoghain

7th May — Tournament:
Tyrone 4-7; Roscommon 0-10

8th May — Tournament:
Tyrone 1-10; Wicklow 2-7

13th May — Challenge:
Dublin 2-14; Tyrone 0-15

12th June — Championship:
Tyrone 3-10; Armagh 1-10

26th June — Championship:
Tyrone 1-15; Donegal 0-10

17th July — Ulster Final:
Down 1-17; Tyrone 1-11

1st October — O Fiach Cup:
Derry 2-10; Tyrone 0-8

16th October — League:
Leitrim 1-7; Tyrone 0-9

30th October — League:
Tyrone 1-8; Cork 0-10

13th November — League:
Louth 1-9; Tyrone 1-7

20th November — Challenge:
Donegal 1-14; Tyrone 2-7

27th November — League:
Tyrone 0-8; Armagh 0-7

29th January — Challenge:
Tyrone 2-8; Queens Univ. 0-10

12th February — Challenge:
Tyrone 1-11; Monaghan 1-11

19th February — League:
Tyrone 0-15; Clare 0-8

5th March — League:
Tyrone 2-13; Galway 0-4

19th March — League:
Tyrone 3-11; Mayo 1-5

26th March — Dr McKenna Cup:
Tyrone 0-10; Armagh 0-9

2nd April — League P/O:
Tyrone 1-10; Louth 0-9

16th April — League Q/F:
Tyrone 3-7; Kerry 0-10

23rd April — Dr McKenna Cup:
Derry 1-13; Tyrone 1-11

Played 21; Won 12;
Drew 2; Lost 7
For: 27-211 (292 pts);
Against: 14-204 (246 pts)
Average per game:
13.9 pts to 11.7 pts.

Dún na nGall

8th May — Dr McKenna Cup:
Armagh 4-9; Donegal 2-9

21st May — Challenge:
Mayo 3-9; Donegal 0-16

5th June — Championship:
Donegal 1-12; Antrim 1-9

26th June — Championship:
Tyrone 1-15; Donegal 0-10

16th October — League:
Donegal 0-8; Down 0-7

30th October — League:
Donegal 0-15; Derry 2-6

6th November — Tournament:
Donegal 2-14; Mayo 1-11

13th November — League:
Donegal 0-12; Dublin 1-8

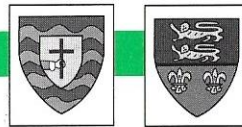
20th November — Challenge:
Donegal 1-14; Tyrone 2-7

27th November — League:
Kildare 1-11; Donegal 1-8

12th February — Willie Dowd Cup:
Donegal 1-10; Dublin 0-11

19th February — League:
Laois 0-10; Donegal 0-8

5th March — League:
Donegal 0-13; Meath 0-11



12th March — Dr McKenna Cup:
Donegal 1-10; Fermanagh 0-12

19th March — League:
Kerry 0-14; Donegal 0-10

26th March — League P/O:
Kerry 1-10; Donegal 1-8

2nd April — League P/O:
Donegal 1-16; Kildare 0-11

9th April — Dr McKenna Cup:
Monaghan 1-13; Donegal 0-8

16th April — League Q/F:
Donegal 2-11; Clare 3-7

Played 19; Won 11;
Drew 0; Lost 8
For: 13-212 (251 pts);
Against: 21-191 (254 pts)
Average per game:
13.2 pts to 13.36 pts.

Laois

29th May — Championship:
Laois 4-15; Longford 2-4

12th June — Championship:
Meath, 0-20; Laois 2-10

16th October — League:
Laois 1-17; Derry 0-8

30th October — League:
Laois 2-14; Down 0-11

13th November — League:
Kildare 2-7; Laois 0-7

27th November — League:
Dublin 0-15; Laois 1-8

8th January — O Byrne Cup:
Laois 3-10; Carlow 0-3

15th January — O Byrne Cup:
Laois 2-13; Wicklow 0-6

5th February — Challenge:
Wicklow 1-9; Laois 1-8

12th February — O Byrne Cup:
Wexford 2-6; Laois 0-10

Summary

Highest average for:
Laois — 15 pts per game

Lowest average for:
Donegal — 13.2 pts per game

Highest average against:
Donegal — 13.36 pts per game

Lowest average against:
Laois — 10.1 per game

Overall scoring averages:
Derry1.112
Tyrone1.188
Donegal0.988
Laois1.485

FREES FLOWING

Any team with aspirations to the highest honours must have at least one competent free-taker in its ranks and all four of this year's semi-finalists have been splendidly served in this respect — Manus Boyle, Declan Bonner, Adrian Cush, Gerard Cavan, Damien Delaney, Anthony Tohill, Eamon Burns and Joe Brolly relentlessly chalking up points from placed balls. Derry, however, had not to rely unduly on scores from frees as in eight games they notched only 19 points as a result of the opposition's indiscretions; Laois knocked over 25 while Tyrone's path was smoothed by the 32 points which their freetakers slotted over.

But Donegal reaped rich dividends from fouls committed by their opponents; in ten games they raised a grand total of 48 white flags from placed balls.



ANTHONY TOHILL
Derry's leading scorer so far with 1-13. A total of 15 players have contributed to Derry's total score of 6.74 (92 pts.).

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DOIRE AGUS TÍR EOGHAIN

Semi-Final Records ... DERRY HAVE THE EDGE

The contrast in the league and championship fortunes of Derry and Tyrone is startling and yet simple; Derry is one of the nine counties that have annexed All-Ireland and National League honours; Tyrone is one of only three counties that have contested finals of both competitions and have still to record a win in either of them. The contrast in regard to league semi-final fortunes may not be so extreme, but it is still there, with the Oak Leaf county claiming a greater success rate than their neighbours from across the Sperrins.

Derry was not the first Ulster county to contest — or win — a league semi-final, but the fact that they followed up their success in the first 'semi' they contested with a win in the final, has given them a place of some distinction in Ulster football history.

Their first appearance in a semi-final was certainly fortuitous — a place in the knock-out stages in a year in which all the leading football powers were eliminated by Cential Council decree as the weather threatened to wipe out the entire programme. Derry capitalised on their good fortune as Larry Higgins shot 1-3 of the 2-11 that saw off Longford's challenge to win a place in the final for the first time.

But it was fervour and skill that took Derry to their next semi-final (1959 against Leitrim) when Sean O'Connell's brace of majors played a big part in winning the day (3-7 to 1-6). And it was three semi-final wins from three appearances when Jim O'Neill's 0-6 accounted for more than half of the total that

accounted for Mayo in '61.

The seventies (when Derry again tasted semi-final action) were, by contrast, years of mind-numbing frustration. In four successive seasons the great promise of the minor and under-21 squads of the late sixties was manifest in the manner in which Derry progressed to the knock-out stage, but then in the semi-finals it all went wrong — and on several occasions by a single point. In '70 they fell to Mayo and a year later to Kerry, to both by the same tantalizing margin (against Kerry Sean O'Connell and Anthony McGurk shared the scoring honours and the verdict still went against Derry). The Kingdom again proved the stumbling block in '72 and there was a day of anger and frustration when the 1973 semi-final ended in a draw. Derry went home and did not return, and Kerry accepted the free passage to the final. The supreme irony was reserved for the '76 'semi'; Brendan Kelly was top scorer as Cork were overcome...by a point, but the verdict was dropped to Dublin in the final ... and by a point.

DERRY DISAPPEAR

For the next 16 years Derry had no role in semi-final football, but when the promise of the 1989 minor team transferred in time to senior ranks, Derry surged through the 1991-92 campaign to surprise Meath in the semi-final at Croke Park as Enda Gormley hit five of their match-winning 12 points. Derry had arrived; and are still here.

Tyrone, by contrast with their neighbours, suffered several defeats

but little trauma in their league semi-final outings. They just couldn't contain Galway's Sean Purcell as the Westerners confirmed championship form (1-10 to 2-5) in the spring of '57 and twelve months later, though Frank Donnelly outscored everyone in sight, Kildare's winning margin of eight points left little room for argument — 3-8 to 1-6.

Tyrone had to wait a long time for their next semi-final trial — and trial it was at Croke Park in '72 as Kerry's blend of youth and experience could not be contained by a brave but disjointed effort. An eight points defeat was not, in the final analysis, an unworthy showing. But it was difficult to salvage anything from the Dublin debacle a year later — apart from Domonic Daly's feat of emerging as Tyrone's top scorer of the day with 1-3 — with a final scoreline of 3-12 to 1-7.

And it was Damien O'Hagan who was involved in a share-out of the scoring honours (a modest 0-3 sufficed) against Monaghan in '85, when the counties finished level at Croke Park, and it was little consolation when Monaghan, who won the replay by 1-8 to 0-8 at Armagh, went on to take the title.

Another period in the league wilderness preceded Tyrone's (and Ulster's) greatest day at Croke Park. Appearing in their sixth semi-final and still seeking a first win, Tyrone were set a mighty task in the shape of a Dublin team bristling with potential and aspirations at Croke Park in '92. The outsiders tag was no handicap. Tyrone buckled to their task and Adrian Cush pointed the way (his 0-4 shared the honours with Charlie Redmond) to a shock but strictly merited 0-13 to 1-9 win; Derry's win, also against the odds that day, signalled a new era for Ulster football. Their final meeting two weeks later might be viewed as a fitting prelude to today's encounter.

Doire

The Derry team which defeated Cavan in the quarter-final at Armagh.

Back row (l-r): Joe Broolly, Dermot Heaney, Eugene Heaney, Declan Cassidy, Damien McCusker, Anthony Tohill, Tony Scullion (captain), Brian McGilligan. Front row (l-r): Enda Gormley, Karl Diamond, John McGurk, Henry Downey, Kieran McKeever, Fergal McCusker, Damien Cassidy.



Comharsana Ultacha i nGleic Arís!

Cúpla bliain ó shoin bhuail Doire agus Tír Eoghain in aghaidh a chéile i gcluiche ceannais na Léige i bPáirc An Chrócaigh agus bhí sár-chluiche ann. Comhscór a bhí ann ag deireadh báire agus san athmirt bhí an lá le peileadóirí na Feabhla.

Ina dhiaidh sin chuaigh Doire ar aghaidh agus bhuarad craobh na hÉireann ('93) ach d'imigh na hEoghanaigh in ísle brí agus, mar sin, fáiltítear rompu ar ais ar an stáid náisiúnta. I 1986, an t-aon ócáid go raibh siad i gcrabhcluiche Uile-Éireann, bhí neart daoine a shíl go n-éireadh leo an lá sin. Sna naochaidí luath bhí foirne ógánaigh (faoi 21) den chéad scoth curtha ar an bpáirc acu agus bhain siad an chraobh sin faoi dhó; tá leas a bhaint astu anois.

Cad is féidir a rá faoi Dhoire Cholmcille? Chaill siad an chéad chúpla cluiche sa Léig reatha ach nuair a bhí réiteach aimsithe ar a gcuid fadhanna thosaigh siad ag imirt ar an mbealach is dual dóibh agus níor cuireadh srian leo go nuige seo. Tá formhór na n-imreoirí a bhain craobh na hÉireann i '93 ar an bhfoireann go fóill agus tá dúil mhór acu an dara craobh a bhaint i mbliana. Is í an cheist a cuirtear ná an mbainfidh cluichí iliomad na sraithe an faobhar dóibh nuair a bhuaifidh aimsir chraobh Uladh linn?

Tá foireann mhór, láidir ag Tír Eoghain agus iad éifeachtach chomh maith. Ní raibh an caighdeán acu le linn na sraithe (Roinn 2) thar moladh beirte go dtí go raibh orthu an dara babhta in aghaidh Lú a imirt féachaint cé acu a rachadh ar aghaidh; bhí feabhas mór le sonrú an lá sin agus cuireadh leis sa chluiche ceathrúcheannais in aghaidh Chiarraí.

Cé a bhuaifidh inniu? Ceaptar go bhfuil tosaigh Dhoire neartaithe ó tháinig Cearúl Ó Díomáin in aois fir agus ar ndóigh bhiodar, mar aonad, láidir go maith roimis sin. Tá imreoirí thar an gcoiteann ar fhoireann Thír Eoghain agus is imeasc na tosaigh is mó atáid. N'fheadar an bhfuil na cosantóirí in inmhe srian a choinneáil ar 'réalta' Dhoire? Ceaptar nach bhfuil agus go rachaidh Contae na Duilleige Daire ar aghaidh go dtí an craobhcluiche.

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Tír Eoghán

The Tyrone team which beat Kerry in the quarter-final at Croke Park.

Back row (l-r): Paul Devlin, Jody Gormley, Seamus McCallan, Gerard Cavan, Sean McLaughlin, Finbar McConnell, Matt McGleenan, Brendan Mallon, Danny Barr, Ciarán McBride. Front row (l-r): Adrian Cush, Joe Cassidy, Chris Lawn, Stephen Lawn, Ciarán Corr, Fay Devlin, Fergal Logan, Ronan McGarrity, Peter Canavan, Stephen Conway. Seated in front (l-r): Damian Loughran, Damian Gormley, Ciarán Loughran.



DOIRE AGUS TÍR EOGHAIN

Previous Meetings

The rivalry of Tyrone and Derry on the football field which goes back to 1906 in the championship arena, took on a league dimension in 1930 when the counties were placed with Donegal and Fermanagh in a second-division group, but the winners of which did not have access to the closing stages of the National League proper.

Nonetheless, for the counties concerned it was a worthwhile competition and strong teams were a feature of every round. Derry and Tyrone were second-round opponents at Dungannon on August 31, 1930 and Tyrone recorded the first of four straight wins over the neighbours. Derry's first win was at Droichead Nua in 1938 and though they won the next four meetings, since then the pendulum has achieved a reasonable balance with Derry's success in the 1992 final bringing their total to 17 wins against Tyrone's 12. The 1952 and 1966 games were drawn. The details of the 31 meetings are:

1930-31 — Dungannon:

Tyrone 3-2; Derry 0-3

1931-32 — Derry:

Tyrone 3-4; Derry 1-3

1933-34 — Stewartstown:

Tyrone 3-3; Derry 1-3

1936-37 — Magherafelt:

Tyrone 1-7; Derry 1-5

1938-39 — Droichead Nua:

Derry 1-8; Tyrone 1-7

1939-40 — Omagh:

Derry 1-5; Tyrone 0-6

1940-41 — Omagh:

Derry 0-6; Tyrone 0-3

1946-47 — Derry:

Derry 3-6; Tyrone 2-3

1947-48 — Dungannon:

Derry 4-2; Tyrone 3-4

1948-49 — Magherafelt:

Tyrone 4-4; Derry 2-5

1949-50 — Lurgan:

Derry 2-4; Tyrone 2-3

1950-51 — Draperstown:

Derry 3-6; Tyrone 0-6

1951-52 — Lurgan:

Derry 3-2; Tyrone 2-5

1952-53 — Magherafelt:

Derry 1-15; Tyrone 0-7

1953-54 — Coalisland:

Tyrone 4-6; Derry 2-6

1954-55 — Armagh:

Derry 1-6; Tyrone 0-4

1965-66 — Coalisland:

Tyrone 1-6; Derry 1-6

1966-67 — Ballinascreen:

Derry 1-14; Tyrone 0-7

1967-68 — Coalisland:

Derry 0-9; Tyrone 0-3

1969-70 — Ballinascreen:

Derry 1-11; Tyrone 0-8

1969-70 — Coalisland:

Derry 1-13; Tyrone 0-3

1973-74 — Omagh:

Tyrone 0-7; Derry 0-4

1974-75 — Ballinascreen:

Tyrone 1-6; Derry 0-8

1975-76 — Dungiven:

Derry 0-14; Tyrone 0-6

1976-77 — Ballinascreen:

Tyrone 0-13; Derry 1-6

1977-78 — Dungannon:

Tyrone 2-5; Derry 1-7

1980-81 — Ballinascreen:

Tyrone 0-9; Derry 0-6

1983-84 — Cookstown:

Tyrone 1-9; Derry 1-3

1986-87 — Omagh:

Derry 0-6; Tyrone 0-5

1990-91 — Derry:

Derry 1-6; Tyrone 1-5

1991-92 — Croke Park:

Derry 1-10; Tyrone 1-8

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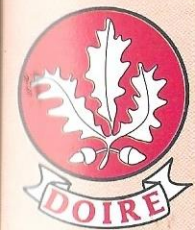
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Doire

Dathanna: Dearg is Bán

Fir Ionaid

- (16) Jonathan Kelly
S. Ó Ceallaigh
(Magherafelt)
- (17) Declan Cassidy
D. Ó Caiside
(Slaughtneil)
- (18) Karl Diamond
C. Ó Diomáin
(Bellaghy)
- (19) Gary McGill
G. Mac an Ghoill
(Glen)
- (20) Geoffrey McGonigle
G. MacCongail
(Dungiven)
- (21) Oliver Collins
O. MacCoileáin
(Lavey)
- (22) Dermot McNicholl
D. MacNiocaill
(Glenullin)
- (23) Sean McGuckin
S. MacEocháin
(Swatragh)
- (24) John Mulholland
S. Ó Maolchallan
(Bellaghy)

1
DAMIEN McCUSKER
D. MacOscair
(Glen)

2
KIERAN McKEEVER
C. MacIomhair
(Dungiven)

5
JOHN McGURK
S. Mag Oirc
(Lavey)

8
ANTHONY TOHILL
A. Ó Tuathail
(Swatragh)

10
DERMOT HEANEY
D. Ó hÉanna
(Castledawson)

13
JOE BROLLY
S. Ó Brolaigh
(Dungiven)

3
TONY SCULLION
A. Ó Scolláin (Capt.)
(Ballinascreen)

6
HENRY DOWNEY
A. Mac Giolla Domhnaigh
(Lavey)

11
DAMIEN BARTON
D. Bartún
(Newbridge)

14
EAMON BURNS
E. Ó Broin
(Ballinascreen)

4
GARY COLEMAN
G. Ó Colmáin
(Magherafelt)

7
FERGAL McCUSKER
F. Mac Oscair
(Glen)

9
BRIAN MCGILLIGAN
B. MacGiollagáin
(Dungiven)

12
DAMIEN CASSIDY
D. Ó Caiside
(Bellaghy)

15
ENDA GORMLEY
E. Ó Garmaile
(Glen)

Tír Eoghain

Dathanna: Bán is Dearg

1
FINBAR McCONNELL
F. Mac Dhónaill
(An Baile Nua)

2
PAUL DEVLIN
P. Ó Doibhlínn
(Baile na Móna)

5
RONAN McGARRITY
R. Mag Aireachtaigh
(An Charraig Mhór)

8
FERGAL LOGAN
F. Ó Leocháin
(An Chraobh)

10
GERARD CAVLAN
G. Ó Cathláin
(Dún Geanainn)

13
MATT MCGLEENAN
M. MacGiollaFhinnéin
(Eaglais)

3
CHRIS LAWN
C. Ó Laitháin
(Baile na Móna)

6
SEAMUS McCALLAN
S. MacAilín
(An Charraig Mhór)

11
CIARÁN CORR
C. Ó Corra (Capt.)
(Oileán a'Ghuail)

14
PETER CANAVAN
P. Ó Ceannubháin
(Aireagal Chiaráin)

4
FAY DEVLIN
F. Ó Doibhlínn
(Árd Bó)

7
SEAN McLAUGHLIN
S. MagLochlainn
(An Droim Caoin)

9
JODY GORMLEY
S. Ó Garmaile
(Trí Leac)

12
ADRIAN CUSH
A. MacCoise
(Domhnach Mór)

15
STEPHEN LAWN
S. Ó Liatháin
(Baile na Móna)

Fir Ionaid

- (16) Joe Cassidy
S. Ó Casaide
(An Gallbhaile)
- (17) Damian Loughran
D. Ó Luachráin
(An Charraig Mhór)
- (18) Pascal Canavan
P. Ó Ceannubháin
(Aireagal Chiaráin)
- (19) Danny Barr
D. Ó Bairr
(Dún Geanainn)
- (20) Brendan Mallon
B. Ó Mealláin
(Dún Geanainn)
- (21) Stephen Conway
S. MacConbhui
(An Cora Criche)
- (22) Ciarán Loughran
C. Ó Luachráin
(An Charraig Mhór)
- (23) Damian Gormley
D. Ó Garmaile
(Trí Leac)
- (24) Ciarán McBride
C. MacGiollaBhríde
(An Omaigh)

Roghnoiri:
Art McRory,
Eugene McKenna

DOIRE

1adh Leath

2adh Leath

IOMLAN

Cúil	Cúilíní	Seachaí	45m	Saor Ciceanna

TÍR EOGHAIN

1adh Leath

2adh Leath

IOMLAN

Cúil	Cúilíní	Seachaí	45m	Saor Ciceanna



PATHS TO THE

SEMI-FINALS



Doire

Round 1 at Celtic Park:

Lost to Laois by 0-8 to 1-17

Round 2 at Ballybofey:

Lost to Donegal by 2-6 to 0-15

Round 3 at Ballinascreen:

Beat Kerry by 1-11 to 2-6

Round 4 at Navan:

Beat Meath by 0-9 to 0-8

Round 5 at Celtic Park:

Beat Down by 1-10 to 1-7

Round 6 at Newbridge:

Beat Kildare by 0-10 to 0-9

Round 7 at Croke Park:

Drew with Dublin 1-9 to 1-9

Quarter-Final at Armagh:

Beat Cavan by 1-11 to 0-11

Total Scored 6-74 (92);

Total Conceded 5-82 (97)

Scorers — Anthony Tohill 1-13, Eamonn Burns 1-12, Geoffrey McGonigle 1-11, Joe Brolly 0-11, Seamus Downey 0-8, Damien Cassidy 0-5, Dermot Doogan 1-2, Karl Diamond 1-1, Dermot Heaney 0-4, Gary McGill 0-3, Eugene Heaney 1-0, Henry Downey 0-1, Aidan Gunning 0-1, Enda Gormley 0-1, B.McCormack 0-1.

Tír Eoghain

Round 1 at Carrick-on-Shannon:

Lost to Leitrim by 0-9 to 1-7

Round 2 at Dungannon:

Beat Cork by 1-8 to 0-10

Round 3 at Drogheda:

Lost to Louth by 1-7 to 1-9

Round 4 at Dungannon:

Beat Armagh by 0-8 to 0-7

Round 5 at Dungannon:

Beat Clare by 0-15 to 0-8

Round 6 at Tuam:

Beat Galway by 2-13 to 0-4

Round 7 at Dungannon:

Beat Mayo by 3-11 to 1-5

Play-Off at Clones:

Beat Louth by 1-10 to 0-9

Quarter-Final at Croke Park:

Beat Kerry by 3-7 to 0-10

Total Scored 11-88 (121);

Total Conceded 3-69 (78)

Scorers — Adrian Cush 2-32, Mattie McGlennon 4-6, Gerard Cavlan 1-14, Peter Canavan 0-10, Stephen Lawn 1-5, Damien Gormley 1-3, Jody Gormley 0-5, Sean McLoughlin 1-2, Ciaran Loughran 0-4, Ciaran Corr 0-4, Ciaran McBride 1-0, Brian Gormley 0-2, Ronan McGarrity 0-1.

Dún na nGall

Round 1 at Newry:

Beat Down by 0-8 to 0-7.

Round 2 at Ballybofey:

Beat Derry by 0-15 to 2-6.

Round 3 at Croke Park:

Beat Dublin by 0-12 to 1-8.

Round 4 at Ballybofey:

Lost to Kildare by 1-8 to 1-11.

Round 5 at Portlaoise:

Lost to Laois by 0-8 to 0-10.

Round 6 at Navan:

Beat Meath by 0-13 to 0-11.

Round 7 at Ballyshannon:

Lost to Kerry by 0-10 to 0-14.

Play-Off at Tuam:

Lost to Kerry by 1-8 to 1-10.

Play-Off at Clones:

Beat Kildare by 1-16 to 0-11.

Quarter-Final at Castlebar:

Beat Clare by 2-11 to 3-7.

Total Scored 5-109 (124);

Total Conceded 8-95 (119).

Scorers — Manus Boyle 1-41, Declan Bonner 1-17, John Duffy 0-19, Tony Boyle 1-9, Brian Murray 1-5, Mark McShane 0-7, John Gildea 0-4, T.J. Ryan 1-0, John Gallagher 0-2, James McHugh 0-2, Noel Hegarty 0-1, Paddy Hegarty 0-1, John Cunningham 0-1.

Laois

Round 1 at Celtic Park:

Beat Derry by 1-17 to 0-8

Round 2 at Portlaoise:

Beat Down by 2-14 to 0-11

Round 3 at Newbridge:

Lost to Kildare by 0-7 to 2-7

Round 4 at Portlaoise:

Lost to Dublin 1-8 to 0-15

Round 5 at Portlaoise:

Beat Donegal by 0-10 to 0-8

Round 6 at Killarney:

Beat Kerry by 1-9 to 0-8

Round 7 at Portlaoise:

Beat Meath by 1-12 to 0-7

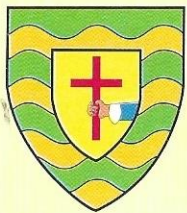
Quarter-Final at Croke Park:

Beat Monaghan by 2-8 to 1-6

Total Scored 8-85 (109);

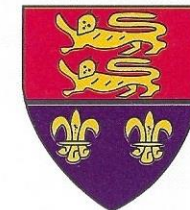
Total Conceded 3-70 (79).

Scorers — Damien Delaney 0-34, Michael Lawlor 3-13, Leo Turley 2-10, Tom Bowe 1-7, Tommy Dunne 1-6, Tony Maher 0-6, Hugh Emerson 1-3, Denis Lalor 0-2, Eamonn Lacey 0-1, Martin Dempsey 0-1, Michael Dempsey 0-1, Mark O'Brien 0-1.



Dún na nGall

1-14
Dathanna: Uaithne is Ór



Laois

2-8
Dathanna: Gorm is Bán

Fir Ionaid

- (16) Tony McMahon
A. MacMathúna
(Ballyroan)
- (17) Aidan Lacey
A. Ó Lactheasa
(St. Joseph's)
- (18) Eamonn Lacey
E. Ó Lactheasa
(Ballylinan)
- (19) Michael Dempsey
M. Ó Diomasaigh
(St. Joseph's)
- (20) Michael Turley
M. MacToirealaigh
(Whitehall/Colmcilles)
- (21) Liam O'Connor
L. Ó Conchubhair
(Craiguecullen)
- (22) Noel Roe
N. Ó Rua
(The Heath)
- (23) John O'Connell
S. Ó Conaill
(Courtwood)
- (24) Colm Maher
C. Ó Meachair
(Portarlinton)

Roghmóirí:
Colm Browne (Portlaoise) Manager;
Gerry Lawlor (Emo);
Dessie Brennan (St. Joseph's).

Fir Ionaid

- (16) Paul Callaghan
P. Ó Ceallcháin
(Beart)
- (17) Tommy Ryan
T. Ó Riain
(An Tearmainn)
- (18) Declan Bonner
D. Ó Caimhsí
(Na Rossa)
- (19) Eugene McMenamin
E. MacMenainn
(Naomh Adhamhain)
- (20) Eamon McMenamin
E. MacMenainn
(MacCumhalls)
- (21) Barry McGowan
B. MacGabhainn
(Na Cealla Beaga)
- (22) Gerard Kelly
G. Ó Ceallaigh
(Aodh Rua CoillmagCuirín)
- (23) Charlie O'Donnell
C. Ó Domhnaill
(Aodh Ruadh Ballyshannon)
- (24) John Gildea
S. MacGiolla dé
(Naomh Conaill)

Roghmóirí:
Seamus Gallagher,
Tom Cornack,
Michael Lafferty,
Sean Ferriter,
P. J. McGowan (Team Manager),
Patsy McGonigle (Coach).

- 1
GARY WALSH
G. Breathnach
(Burren)
- 2
JOHN JOE DOHERTY
S. S. Ó Dochartaigh
(Naomh Columba)
- 3
MATT GALLAGHER
M. Ó Gallchóir
(Naomh Bríd)
- 4
NOEL HEGARTY
N. Ó hEigeartaigh 0-1
(Naomh Columba)
- 5
JOHN CUNNINGHAM
S. MacCuinneagáin
(Na Cealla Beaga)
- 6
MARTIN GAVIGAN
M. Ó Gaibheagáin
(Ard na Rath)
- 7
MARTIN SHOVLIN
M. Ó Sheibhleáin
(Naomh Ultan)
- 8
MARK McSHANE
M. MacSeáin
(Cill Chartha)
- 9
BRIAN MURRAY
B. Ó Muirí 0-1
(An Stát Sheirbhis)
- 10
JAMES McHUGH
S. MacAoidh 1-3
(Cill Chartha)
- 11
JOHN BÂN GALLAGHER
S. B. Ó Gallchóir
(Na Cealla Beaga)
- 12
PADDY HEGARTY
P. Ó hEigeartaigh
(Naomh Columba)
- 13
JOHN DUFFY
S. Ó Dufaigh 0-3
(Aodh Ruadh Ballyshannon)
- 14
TONY BOYLE
A. Ó Baoill
(An Clochan Liath)
- 15
MANUS BOYLE
M. Ó Baoill 0-4
(Na Cealla Beaga)

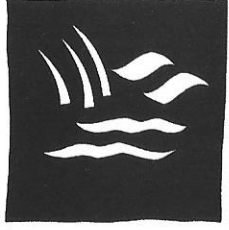
- 1
EMMETT BURKE
E. de Búrca
(St. Joseph's)
- 2
ADRIAN PHELAN
A. Ó Faoláin
(Portarlinton)
- 3
MARTIN DEMPSEY
M. Ó Diomasaigh
(St. Joseph's)
- 4
TOM CONROY
T. Ó Conraoi
(Portlaoise)
- 5
EAMONN DELANEY
E. Ó Dúláinne
(Stradbally)
- 6
DENIS LALOR
D. Ó Leathlobhair
(The Heath)
- 7
GEORGE DOYLE
G. Ó Dúill
(Courtwood)
- 8
TONY MAHER
A. Ó Meachair
(Stradbally)
- 9
P. J. DEMPSEY
P. S. Ó Diomasaigh
(St. Joseph's)
- 10
TOM BOWE
T. Ó Buaigh
(Stradbally)
- 11
TONY DUNNE
A. Ó Doinn
(The Harps)
- 12
MICHAEL LAWLOR
M. Ó Leathlobhair
(Emo)
- 13
MARK O'BRIEN
M. Ó Broin
(St. Joseph's)
- 14
DAMIEN DELANEY
D. Ó Dúláinne
(Stradbally)
- 15
LEO TURLEY
L. MacToirealaigh
(O'Dempsey's)

DÚN NA nGALL

	Cúil	Cúilíní	Seacháí	45m	Saor Ciceanna
1adh Leath					
2adh Leath					
IOMLAN					

LAOIS

	Cúil	Cúilíní	Seacháí	45m	Saor Ciceanna
1adh Leath					
2adh Leath					
IOMLAN					



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Laois

The Laois team which defeated Monaghan in the quarter-final at Croke Park two. Back row (l-r): Leo Turley, Tom Conroy, Adrian Phelan, Tony Dunne, Emmet Burke, Tony Maher, P.J. Dempsey, Eamonn Delaney. Front row (l-r): Damien Delaney, Denis Lalor, Hughie Emerson, Martin Dempsey, George Doyle, Mark O'Brien, Michael Lawlor.



Semi-Final Ventures ...

LAOIS CLAIM PRECEDENCE

Despite their respective profiles in league and championship in recent years, Laois can claim that while the New Ireland trophy has remained tantalizingly beyond Donegal's reach at every attempt, on the two occasions they have reached the last two, success has attended their efforts.

In the matter of semi-final success the Leinster county can also claim precedence as their first win at this stage of the league was in 1926, twenty six years before Donegal contested their first semi and 56 years before the Ulstermen recorded their only semi-final win to date.

But Laois's initial success in semi-final combat did not come easily. In fact, it took a boardroom decision to stage a replay of the Croke Park tie in which they lost to Sligo to get them back in contention in the spring of 1926. The game at headquarters saw John White's two great goals help the Westerners to a 3-5 to 2-6 win, but as was not at all unusual at the time, an objection by Laois resulted in the Central Council ordering a second meeting which was staged at Roscommon six weeks later and Laois made no mistake winning by 4-6 to 1-4. Interestingly, it was a Sligo man who again took the individual scoring honours — Mick Noone accounting for the losers total score which was two points better than the best from Joe Ward, Laois's top marksman on the day.

There was little possibility of a Laois man taking the scoring honours when the county next contested a semi-final — as Dublin blasted them by 7-5 to 1-5 at Portlaoise in 1952. More than a quarter of a century later Willie Brennan shared the honours with Dublin's Bobby Doyle (0-3 each) at Croke Park...but the verdict still went to Dublin, 0-12 to 0-7. That defeat was avenged in the 1986 'semi' when towering Liam Irwin hit a best-of-the-day 0-5 in Laois's 0-12 to 1-7 win. Laois's most recent venture at the penultimate stage brought little joy to the Midlanders as Armagh proved too good in winning by 3-11 to 1-9 in last year's clash in which Tony Maher's 1-2 was the best return by a Laois forward.

A LONG WAIT

If Laois's first experience of semi-final combat had a satisfactory outcome, Donegal's first experience at this stage was in stark contrast, as indeed was much subsequent activity. All their early semi-final jousts ended in defeat and the first set the pattern that was to survive for 40 years. Cork were undoubtedly favourites for the 1952 clash at Croke Park. Disaster struck early in the shape of three first-half goals to the Munstermen which left it 3-2 to 0-4 at the break. A crowd of more than 20,000 saw Donegal raise their game in the closing moiety, Cork were held to a single point,

but the Donegal forwards also found life difficult as shown by the final scoreline of 3-3 to 0-7.

When Donegal reached their second semi-final (1965) Kerry were nearly always in control and there was no denying the merit of the verdict — though a margin of eight points did less than justice to a brave Donegal bid (3-10 to 1-8). And a year later the frustration was palpable when an inspiring 0-8 by Micky McLoone still couldn't get Donegal past the semi-final barrier as Longford won by 0-13 to 0-11.

For the third year in succession Donegal were semi-finalists, but their luck was still out as Cyril Dunne steered Galway to a 1-10 to 2-4 win. That semi-final will always be recalled for the bizarre penalty incident which was extremely rough justice on Donegal; indeed, the game probably pivoted on referee Eamonn Moules unprecedented decision. But the 1969 thrashing by Offaly (2-13 to 1-3) was undoubtedly Donegal's most dismal day on semi-final fields, and then, surprisingly, in the years of their championship breakthrough in the early seventies their newly-found affluence did not extend to the National League as Derry and Tyrone carried the Ulster banner into the closing stages.

However, the turning on a long road eventually yielded to Donegal's admirable perseverance when on their seventh appearance in a semi-final, the 1993 team atoned for many past failures with a 1-12 to 1-7 win over Clare.

The subsequent defeat at the hands of Dublin in a replayed final may have been a big disappointment, but breaking the 40-year-old semi-final bogey was still an achievement to be cherished.

Dún na nGall

The Donegal team which defeated Clare in the quarter-final at Castlebar. Back row (l-r): Tony Boyle, John Duffy, Matt Gallagher, Brian Murray, Gary Walsh, John Joe Doherty, Paddy Hegarty, Manus Boyle, Declan Bonner. Front row (l-r): Mark McShane, Noel Hegarty, John Cunningham, Martin Shovlin, James McHugh, Gerard Kelly.



Previous Meetings

Whatever phrase is used to describe Donegal and Laois it will not be 'old rivals', for never having met at senior level in the championship, their paths were extremely slow to cross in the league and it was as 'late' as 1970 before they found themselves in opposition for the first time. And that meeting did not come about as a result of one or the other of them gaining promotion from the lower ranks, but because of a restructuring of the league into eight-team divisions after some years of experimenting with four — and even three — team groups.

Their first round clash at Ballybofey on the third Sunday in October, 1970 did not exactly get top billing, though in a game that had its moments the visitors triumphed by a margin of six points. Surprisingly, the next two meetings were also on northern soil and resulted in a pair of draws between evenly

matched sides. Laois managed to win only one of the five clashes in the eighties, but overall, the Midlanders show the better record, as of the eleven meetings to date, they have won five to Donegal's three.

The details:

- 1970-71 — Ballybofey:**
Laois 2-7; Donegal 1-4
- 1973-74 — Ballyshannon:**
Donegal 3-9; Laois 2-12
- 1974-75 — Ballyshannon:**
Donegal 0-10; Laois 0-10
- 1975-76 — Portlaoise:**
Laois 0-12; Donegal 0-11
- 1981-82 — Ballyshannon:**
Donegal 0-10; Laois 2-3
- 1982-83 — Portarlington:**
Laois 0-7; Donegal 0-7
- 1983-84 — Ballybofey:**
Donegal 1-10; Laois 0-8
- 1986-87 — Ballyshannon:**
Laois 2-9; Donegal 0-5
- 1987-88 — Portlaoise:**
Donegal 1-5; Laois 0-3
- 1993-94 — Croke Park:**
Laois 0-8; Donegal 0-7
- 1994-95 — Portlaoise:**
Laois 0-10; Donegal 0-8

NEIGHBOURLY CONFLICT

The meeting of Tyrone and Derry today means a battle of neighbouring counties in a National League semi-final, a by no means regular feature of semi-final competition, although last year's Meath-Westmeath clash was also a case of adjoining counties 'in conflict'. Over the years such confrontations have emerged at somewhat irregular intervals, the first of these being Galway and Roscommon at a city venue in 1940. Louth and Down provided the second instance of neighbourly semi-final rivalry at Newcastle in 1949 and since those days Meath and Cavan, Dublin and Meath (twice), Roscommon-Sligo, Offaly-Roscommon, Roscommon-Mayo, and Cork-Kerry have added to the number. The 1985 all-Ulster semi-finals provided the only 'double feature' in the history of the competition — Armagh-Down and Monaghan — Tyrone which, with last year's and this year's confrontation, brings to eleven the total number of 'neighbourly conflicts' since the first semi-final in 1926.

Michael Lawlor (Laois) races away from Michael Slowey (Muineacháin) to set up an attack in the quarter-final meeting at Croke Park.



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1995 Masters Football

The Masters football competition will be played over the next two months in six rounds. The quarter-finals are scheduled for the 22nd and 29th July with the semi-finals and final to be played on August 12th and 27th, respectively. The schedule for May is as follows:

6/5/95 — 6 P.M. — ROUND 1:
Armagh: Ard Mhacha v Dún na nGall
Scotstown: Muineacháin v Aontroim
Drogheda: An Lú v Tir Eoghain

Breffni Park: An Cabhán v An Dún
Tulach Mhór: Uibh Fháilí v Cill Dara
Iveagh Grounds, Crumlin: Baile Átha Cliath v Laois
Michael Fay Park: An Longfort v Gaillimh
Hyde Park: Ros Comáin v Maigh Eó

20/5/95 — 6 P.M. — ROUND 2:

Ballyshannon: Dún na nGall v Muineacháin
Casement Park: Aontroim v Ard Mhacha

Omagh: Tir Eoghain v An Cabhán
Rostrevor: An Dún v An Lú
Clane: Cill Dara v Baile Átha Cliath
Mountmellick: Laois v Uibh Fháilí
Tuam: Gaillimh v Ros Comáin
Ballina: Maigh Eó v An Longfort

27/5/95 — 6 P.M. — ROUND 3:

Ballyshannon: Dún na nGall v Aontroim

Lurgan: Ard Mhacha v Muineacháin
Omagh: Tir Eoghain v An Dún
Drogheda: An Lú v An Cabhán
Clane: Cill Dara v Laois
Tulach Mhór: Uibh Fháilí v Baile Átha Cliath
Tuam: Gaillimh v Maigh Eó
Michael Fay Park: An Longfort v Ros Comáin

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Laoisigh Uaibhreacha Laighean Sa Bhearna

As ceithre foirne sna cluichí leathcheannais Léige '95 is iad fir uaibhreacha Laoise an t-aon fhoireann lasmuigh de chúige Uladh atá fágtha ann. Moltar iad.

Ní hé amháin sa Léig atá na hUltaigh chun tosaigh ach sa chraobhchomortas chomh maith. Nuair a bhain An Dún craobh na hÉireann i '91 níorbh' fhada gur lean Dún na nGall a sampla agus rug siad siúd a gcéad chraobh Uile-Éireann ariamh i '92. Is eol don saol mór go bhfuilid ar bís chun an dara ceann a bhaint.

Níor bhain na Laoisigh craobh na hÉireann ariamh ach bhain siad craobh na Léige faoi dhó agus is mó craobh Laighean atá bainte acu chomh maith. Bhí an sloinne Ó Dúláine go mór chun tosaigh ariamh ar fhoirne Laoise tríd na blianta agus tá cúpla peileadóir an-éifeachtach den sloinne sin ag imirt inniu. Táthar ag súil go mbeidh Damien, ach go háirithe, in ann neart scóranna a ghnóthú le linn an chluiche inniu.

Tá bunús na foirne, a bhuaigh craobh shinsear Uile-Éireann, fós ag na Conallaigh agus is dócha gurbé Máirtín MacAodha an tosach ab'fhearr a bhí acu; níl sé ag imirt anois agus is cailliúint mhór é. Ar an lámh eile dhe an amhlaidh nach bhfuil dúil ló-láidir sna Conallaigh craobh na Léige a bhaint? Ní hé go bhfuil dímheas acu ar an gcomortas ach go bhfuil dátaí chraobh Uladh ró-chóngarach don chluiche ceannais Léige.

Nuair a casadh an dá fhoireann seo ar a chéile sa sraith láthreach (Roinn I) bhí an lá ag An Contae Uí Mhórdha. Tabharfaidh an bua sin uchtach dóibh inniu; anuas ar sin táthar ann a cheapann go bhfuil ré na Mí agus na 'Dubs' ag teacht chun deiridh i gCuíge Laighean agus gurbé Laois a choinneoidh bratach an chúige anairde san blianta rómhainn. Tabharfaidh sin spreagadh dóibh chomh maith.

Ceaptar go mbeidh ard-chluiche againn inniu agus go mbeidh an lá le fir uaibhreacha Chontae Uí Mhórdha — ar éigin.

Changing Formations

Unlike the championship, the teams which reach the closing stages of the National League often bear scant resemblance to the sides which started out on the trail the previous October. The reasons are varied — club commitments, players wishing to take a break and occasionally disenchantment with inter-county fare. It is an unfailing pattern in the league, at least with three of this year's semi-finalists — Laois, Donegal and Tyrone, but with Derry the problem — if problem it is — assumed quite extraordinary proportions as they were forced to introduce a big number of new faces in the early rounds because of the situation within the county last autumn. The result was that Derry fielded more players in the current league than any other county. It is of interest to note how few players lined out in all their county's engagements. Here is how each county fared in personnel matters between the first round and in qualifying for today's games:

Laois: Laois were positively thrifty in regard to the number of players used and, in fact, 18 players sufficed to cover their needs (apart from two subs) during the first four rounds. Not surprisingly, the Midlanders had more men who started in all eight games to date than the other three semi-finalists — Martin Dempsey, Denis Lawler, Tom Cooney, George Doyle,

Michael Lawler, Damien Delaney and Leo Turley. Tony Dunne lined out in seven games and came on as a substitute against Dublin, while Hugh Emerson, Tom Bowe and Tony Maher each missed just one game.

Donegal: Although they had a reasonably settled squad starting out and made only a small number of changes from any one game to the next, they still contrived to give no fewer than 29 players a run. But only five of these appeared in all ten outings to date — J.J. Doherty, Matt Gallagher, Brian Murray, John Duffy and Manus Boyle. Gary Walsh, Mark Crossan and Mark McShane just failed to join this quintet — the goalkeeper missing the second round against Derry, McShane the game with Laois at Portlaoise, and Crossan the quarter-final against Clare.

Derry: It says much for the current health of Derry football that they could begin their league campaign in disarray

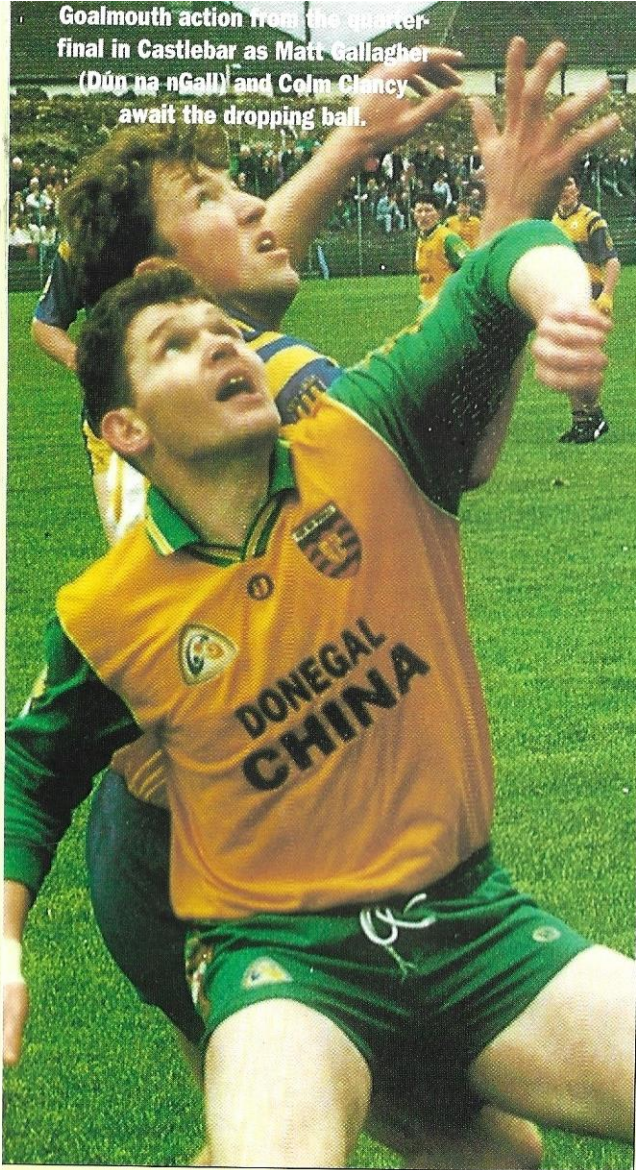
and still fight their way back to the concluding stages with only two of the first and second round selections still in action. In the circumstances the net was thrown far and wide and in the process Derry set up a record for the number of players who saw service — a staggering 40 in all. But only Tony Scullion featured in all eight games, a distinction narrowly missed by Garry McGill and Sean McGuckian who failed to find favour for the quarter-final after playing right through the league section.

Tyrone: Although they began their campaign with a team that looked reasonably settled, they soon began to ring the changes and by the third round a number of the original fifteen had been replaced, and indeed, only eight of this group were on duty against Kerry. Five players took part in all nine games — Sean McLaughlin, Gerard Cavlan, Paul Devlin, Ciaran Corr and Adrian Cush. Pascal Canavan, who featured in eight outings, missed the quarter-final against Kerry. In all, 29 players have worn the Tyrone jersey in this campaign.

CONTRASTING GOALS

On the way to this year's knock-out stages, Donegal and Laois experienced contrasting fortunes in the matter of scoring and conceding goals. In their seven games in the divisional section Laois conceded only two goals — both to Kildare in the third-round. But if Laois were efficient in preventing the opposition in finding the net, Donegal were less than efficient in raising the green flag as they managed only one 'major', which was against Kildare at Ballybofey — ironically, a game which they lost. The forwards improved subsequently, knocking in four in their last three games.

Goalmouth action from the quarter-final in Castlebar as Matt Gallagher (Dún na nGall) and Colm Clancy await the dropping ball.



RARE TREBLE

In qualifying for this year's quarter-final Laois recorded a rare — not to say unique — treble in that they overcame the All-Ireland champions of the past four years — Down (1994 and 1991), Derry (1993) and Donegal (1992). The only other champions of recent times which they encountered were Meath ('87, '88) and Kerry (1986) and here the O'Moore county were also successful, to set up an amazing series of wins over the holders of the Sam Maguire Cup...a trophy Laois themselves have yet to win.

MARKSMEN SUPREME

Manus Boyle's excellent 1-6 in the defeat of Clare a fortnight ago has brought him within striking distance of the league's top scorer to date, Wicklow's Conan Daye who heads the chart with an impressive 5-41 (56 points). Going into today's game the Donegal marksman trails the leader by twelve points, but such has been his form this season, that he could conceivably bridge the gap. A final outing would almost ensure that he finished up as the overall top marksman of the campaign, as Adrian Cush (2-32), Damien Delaney (0-34), Michael Lawlor (3-22) and fellow-countyman Declan Bonner (1-17) are too far adrift to mount a credible challenge.

However, the above named are not the only players to impress in the matter of flag-raising in the current league: Dennis Russell (Clare), Des Barry (Longford) and, surprisingly, Kilkenny's Damien Walsh, who is currently eighth in the chart, have all been models of consistency, scoring in all their counties' games. Russell, who has returned a very modest 12 points in Clare's campaign, still managed to get his name on the scoresheet in all eight games! And almost certain to emerge as the top goal scorer is Clare's Martin Daly who went into the quarter-finals with three majors to his credit and pushed it to six before the end of the hour. Only Michael Lawlor, who has three goals to his credit (plus 13 points), can have a realistic chance of overhauling the Lissycasey sharpshooter. All in all, it has been a good campaign for the game's leading marksmen, with the possibility of a cliff-hanger finish adding to its attraction.

1985 ... Ulster's Year of Glory

Only for Laois's intervention, the closing stages of this year's league would have been an almost perfect replica of the situation at the tail end of the 1984-85 season when Ulster counties completely dominated the concluding rounds. But there is one essential difference between 1995 and 1985 and that is the championship back-drop to both years. For four years the Sam Maguire trophy has rested in Ulster and there is a widespread belief that it is likely to remain there for some time, but in the mid-eighties as Ulster floundered in a championship morass there was little indication that a northern monopoly of even one campaign was in the offing. True, there had been a Down-Armagh league final only two years previously, but that had come at a time when most of the leading powers were reorganising their forces after years of hectic campaigning in championship and league and was accorded only minor significance.

By 1984 Ulster football appeared to be struggling. It was 16 years since the last All-Ireland

had gone north and in the intervening years only one Ulster team (Armagh) had managed to qualify for the final. There was little to suggest that the province would provide an unprecedented four semi-finalists when the knock-out stages of the league were reached. Previously, Leinster, in some of their finest periods, had three counties in league semi-finals as did Connacht on one occasion, and if any province looked likely to provide the complete semi-final line-up in the mid-eighties...it wasn't Ulster. But it was.

MUTED OPENING

The opening of the league in October '84 was less than spectacular as far as Ulster teams were concerned: Monaghan and Down lost while Tyrone and Armagh shared the points at the Athletic Grounds. But as the months rolled by at least six teams from the North were setting the pace and five of them — Monaghan, Armagh, Down, Tyrone and Cavan were destined to make it to the knock-out stages. At the end of the divisional section Tyrone and Armagh shared top spot in

Division One with nine points each while Down shared third spot with Kildare. Monaghan were the top team in Division Two with ten points, one better than their nearest challengers Wexford. Cavan made it an Ulster quintet in the quarter-finals when they emerged the winners of Division Three, but it fell to Tyrone to dismiss the Breffni men when the last eight lined up. Armagh disposed of Carlow, 1-8 to 0-6 at Croke Park where Monaghan crushed a surprisingly inept Kildare team by 4-6 to 0-2, and Down, also at headquarters, saw off Roscommon to create a unique semi-final situation with four teams from the same province.

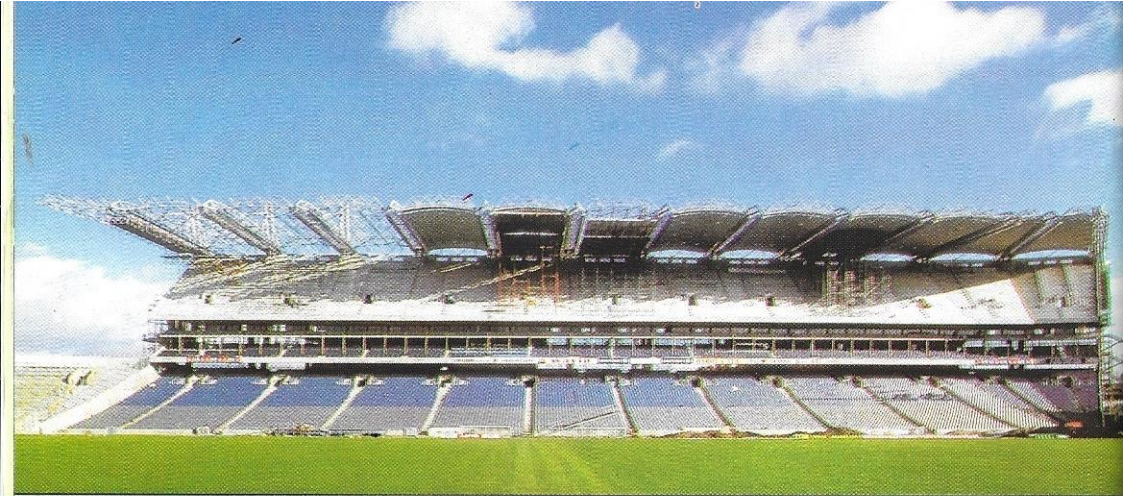
The semi-finals, staged at Croke Park on the same day, were contrasting affairs: Down, with many of the 1983 players still on duty, were well beaten by Armagh, 1-9 to 0-6, but Tyrone and Monaghan finished level, 0-9 to 1-6. An hour at the Athletic Grounds in Armagh sorted out the problem in favour of Monaghan a week later, 1-8 to 0-8 who went on to their first — and, to date, only — title at Croke Park on April 8th. For the Oriel county it was the ultimate experience, but truly, all five counties that made it to the knock-out stages made it a year of glory for Ulster.

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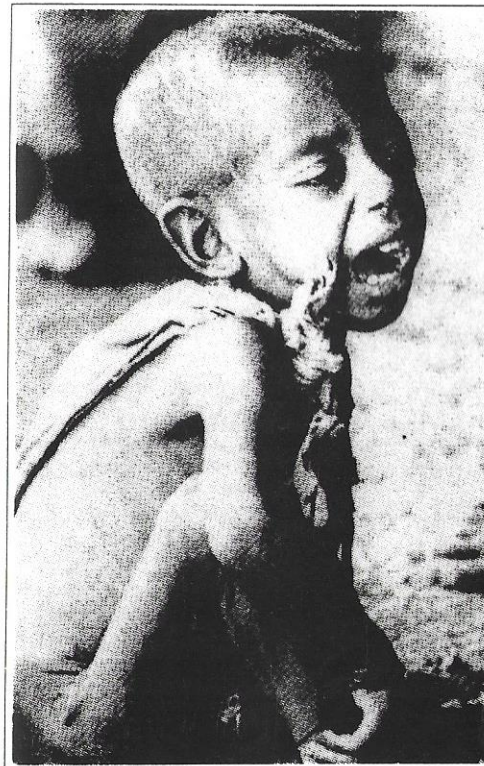
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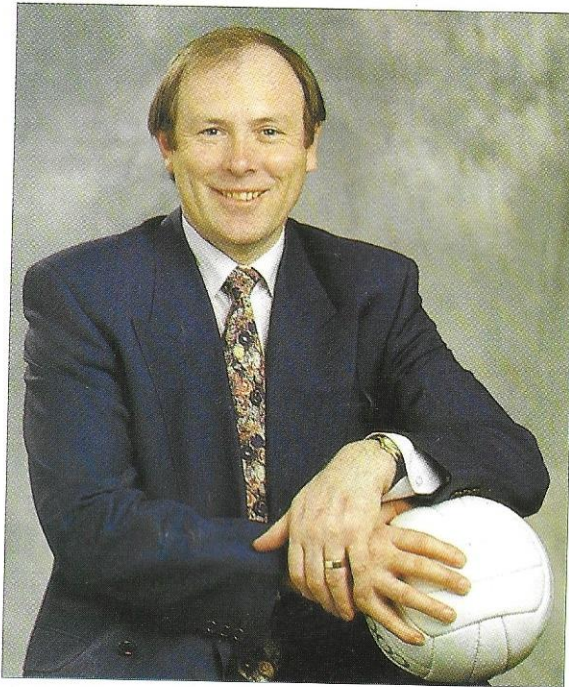
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