
Church & General
National Leagues



Church & General National Football League

Final

Páirc an Chrócaigh
5 Bealtaine, 1996

Clár Oifigiúil
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Kian Ó Maoláichéil
Ard Stiúrthóir

The Greats



It is a feature of most generations that their heroes are remembered with affection.

The passage of time can often mix man and myth. Feats, already great, become embellished, reputations, already untarnished, become even glossier.

In the history of Gaelic football few have matched the achievements of Kerry's Mick O'Connell. At his best, and that was nearly every time he laced his boots, this man from Valentia Island was majestic.

His kicking, with either foot, was wonderfully accurate. He could place a ball in a forward's hand from 40-50 yards. Off the ground, his kicking was technically perfect. And, of course, high catching was his hallmark.

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Football Championship



take-off like an Olympic high jumper thus reaching the apex at the precisely correct moment. Man and ball uniting high above the ground and all opposition. He attained a perfection in his play that is etched forever in the hearts of all who saw him.

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All-Ireland Vocational Schools' Football Final

1.45

Ciarraí v. Dún na nGall

Réiteoir: Pat O'Toole (Longfort)



Church & General
National Leagues

Church & General

National Football League Final

3.30

Doire v. Dún na nGall

Réiteoir: Michael Curley (Gaillimh)

Linesmen: Seamus McCormack (An Mhi) and Adrian Walsh (Baile Átha Cliath)

DBA

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**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.**

MEDICAL / LOST CHILDREN

MEDICAL:

Upper Hogan: Medical Centre rear of Press Area.

Lower Hogan: Treatment and Cardiac Ambulance rear of Section G/L.

New Stand Lower: Medical Centre rear of Section 301.

Treatment and Cardiac Ambulance rear of Stand.

Medical Personnel on duty on Premium and Box Level.

Hill 16: Treatment Ambulance beside Treatment Centre rear of Terrace.

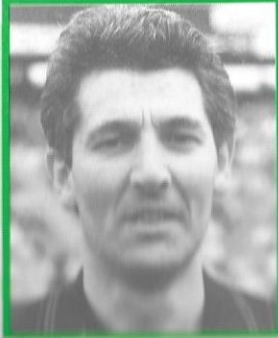
The Site Medical Officer will be situated on the pitch in front of the Nally Stand.

All Treatment Centres are staffed by St. John's Ambulance Brigade members.

LOST CHILDREN:

Lost Children can be collected at the above Medical Centres.

Na Réitoirí



Michael Curley (Gaillimh)

Michael refereed last year's All-Ireland minor final between Westmeath and Derry. He has been refereeing for over nine years and took charge of his second successive Connacht final in 1994.

Curly was the man in the middle at the Bank of Ireland Leinster senior championship game between Meath and Longford at Longford last year. His assignments in the current League included the Derry-Kildare tie at Celtic Park in early February.

A native of County Galway, Curley assisted Creggs in under-age football and represented Roscommon in the minor grade as the club was affiliated to the county for G.A.A. purposes.



Pat O'Toole (An Longfort)

Pat takes control of his second successive All-Ireland Vocational Schools' final. Now one of the most experienced referees in the game, he has taken charge of many top-class matches including the 1994 interprovincial final between Ulster and Munster and the Meath-Offaly Leinster senior championship tie at Navan in May.

O'Toole, from the Forgnay club, has been active in the current Church & General National League. His programme included the Cavan-Down Division II match at Breffni Park in early February.



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Club Champions 1996.

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AIB All-Ireland Hurling
Club Champions 1996.



THE ALL-IRELAND
CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS.

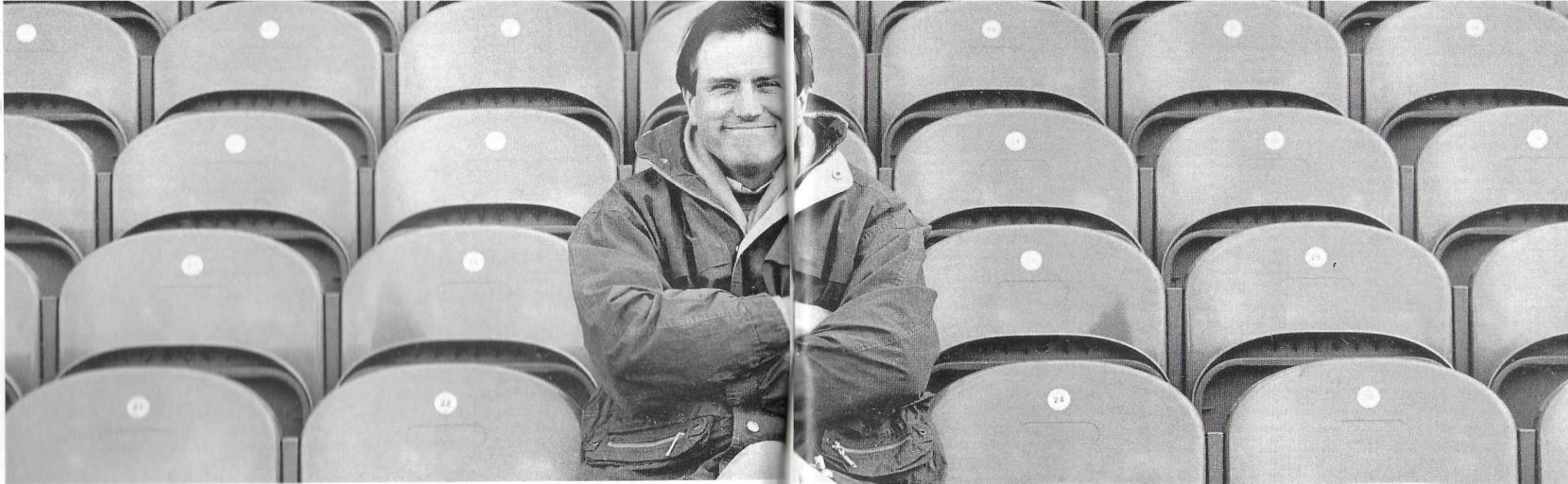
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Third time lucky for Donegal — or a double for Derry?

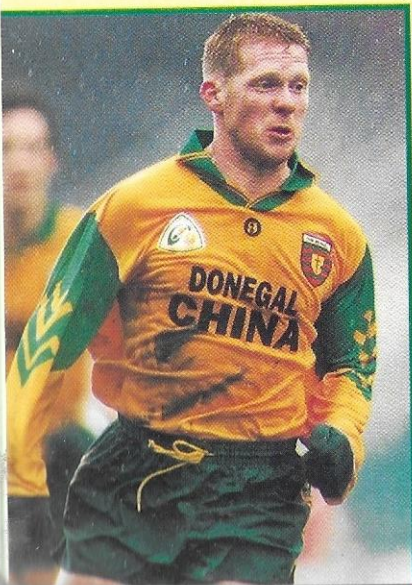
Will it prove a case of third time lucky for Donegal in the Church and General National Football League final? Or will Derry become the first county since Kerry's run of four titles in succession (1971-74) to retain the crown?

These are some of the intriguing questions as Donegal and Derry meet for the second successive year in a League summit — the first time this has happened since Kerry had successive wins over Mayo in 1971 and 1972.

Donegal had to wait until as recently as 1993 for their National League final debut. They went into that game as All-Ireland senior champions and played a draw with Dublin. The Dubs won the replay.

Their only other final outing was last year when they lost to their Ulster neighbours. In their

Setting in at corner-forward — Donegal's Brian Roper.



three games for the title Donegal failed to score a goal.

Should Donegal make it third time lucky a new name will go on the League Roll of Honour for the first time since Monaghan won their only title eleven years ago.

Of the Donegal players who lined out in the semi-final, Gary Walsh, J.J. Doherty, Matt Gallagher, Barry McGowan, Martin Shovlin, Brian Murray, Noel Hegarty, Tony Boyle and Manus Boyle all appeared in the 1993 final and replay and last year's decider.

ULSTER'S FIRST

Derry won their first League title in 1947 to become the first county to bring the title to Ulster. Their next success was in 1992 when a goal by Anthony Tohill from a "45" (the ball was deflected to the net by a defender) set them up for their win over Tyrone. That goal three minutes from the end tied the scores and an Anthony Tohill point gave Derry the lead. They eventually finished with two points to spare.

The Oak Leaf made it title number three in a goalless summit with their Ulster neighbours last May.

Kieran McKeever, Tony Scullion, Henry Downey, Fergal McCusker, Anthony Tohill, Brian McGilligan, Joe Brolly and Enda Gormley, of the side that beat Mayo last time out, lined out in both finals of the nineties.

Seamus Downey, full forward in the recent semi-final, went in as a substitute in 1992 and was in action in last year's decider.

John McGurk, who also went in as a substitute against

Mayo, played against Donegal a year ago and won his first League medal after making an entry from the substitutes bench against Tyrone.

Fergal McCusker won his first League medal at full forward.

It is 48 years since the League title was brought North two years in succession. Derry's initial win of 1947 was followed a year later by Cavan's entry into the Roll of Honour. The Breffni County has not since won the League.

The highest individual score by a Donegal player in a League final is 0-4 by Manus Boyle in the 1993 replay with Dublin. Tops for Derry is 1-5 by Tohill against Tyrone.

If Donegal come out on top they will become the fifth Ulster county to win the title and that would put the North ahead of the field as far as successes by different counties are concerned.

Dublin, Meath, Laois and Longford keep Leinster in line with Ulster at present.



Fergal McCusker (Doire).

Coimhlint na gComharsan Ultacha: Go Maire Siad

Is bliain choimhlint na gcomharsan i 1996 de réir cosúlachta agus, lasmuigh den gluiche áirithe seo inniu tá Doire agus Dún na nGall, comharsana, i gcoimhlint lena chéile go rímhianic.

Ach anuas ar gach rud is athimirt chraobhchluiche na Léige 1995 an cluiche seo inniu nuair a bhí an dá chontae iomraiteacha seo mar chéilí imeartha ar an ócáid sin freisin. Bhí an lá le fir chontae na Duilleoige Darach an taca sin agus n'fheadar an mbeidh an toradh céanna ann inniu.

IDIR dhá linn (nó idir dhá Léig!) bhuaile na Conallaigh le fir chalma Dhoire i gcrabhbhcomortas Uladh agus thugadar bata agus bóthar dóibh; bhítheas ann a cheap go raibh Tír Chonaill ar a mbealach chun craobh Uile-Éireann a bhaint tar éis an bhua sin.

Níl mórán athruithe ar an dá fhoireann in imeacht na bliana ach tá ceann tábhachtach amháin le sonrú — ní raibh Seosamh Ó Broiligh in ann, de dheasca gortaithe, imirt sa chraobhchluiche thuasluaite ach ón uair a tháinig sé 'ar ais' tá sé níos éifeachtaí ná mar a bhí sé ariamh. Tá Antóin Ó Tuathail ag barr maitheasa i lár na páirce agus a chomrádaí Brian Ó Giollagáin tar éis léas nua ar an óige a ghlaicadh!

Chruthaigh tacaigh Thír Chonaill ar fheabhas in aghaidh Chorcaí; tá Seán Ó Cuinneagáin ar ais ar a shean-léim agus tá an leathlíne, Máirtín Ó Sheibhleáin, Barra Mac Gabhann agus Marc MacCrosáin ar cheann chomh héifeachtach is atá sa tír. Bheadh sé fánach ag duine geall a chur go mbeidh an lámh in uachtar go huile is go hiomlán ag Doire i lár an ghoirt. Tá Brian Ó Muirí agus Séamus Mac Ruáin in ann is in inmhe an dís is fearr a cheannsu sa réimse sin den pháirc; ní gá ach ceist a chur ar mhuintir Chorcaí.

Ag deireadh báire tagann sé go dtí cnámh na huilne — an bhfuil tacaigh Dhoire cumasach go leor, mar aonad, chun tosaigh Thír Chonaill a smachtú? Is féidir a rá nach raibh na Conallaigh, mar aonad, maith go leor chun tacaigh Chorcaí a cheannsu. Ach ní mór chuimhneamh go bhfuil tacaigh Chorcaí (curaidh na Mumhan) ard-éifeachtach agus rinne tosaigh Dhún na nGall

ard-obair le bheith ar chomhscór lena gcéilí imeartha — go dtí gur annsigh Seán Bán Ó Gallchóir cúlín gleoite ó adar fada amach a thug an bua do na Tuaisceartaigh.

Is gá comparáid a dhéanamh idir an dá chluiche leathcheannais. Bhí céilí imeartha Dhoire, Maigh Eo, i ndroch-chaoi maidir le himreoirí gortaithe agus anuas ar sin is atógáil atá ar siúl acu. I gcás Dhún na nGall bhí foireann Chorcaí, curaidh na Mumhan agus den chuid is mó socraithe síos le tamall anuas, ar bís chun an Léig a bhuan. Mar sin ceaptar go raibh aistír níos déine ag na Conallaigh agus gur acu siúd a bheidh an lá. Chomh maith níl aon chraobh Léige acu go dtí seo rud ba mhian leo a fháil agus cén bealach is fearr chuige ná díoltas a bhaint as an gcailliúint anuraidh!

Ach is léir ón chaoi a d'oibrigh rudaí amach sa chomortas Léige Church & General 1995/96 nach bhfuil peileadóirí Uladh imithe faoi thalamh. Go maire siad.

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Another Donegal Double Bid

This is the second successive year that Donegal are in line for a big double on Church and General National Football League final day.

Last May the county's Vocational Schools' team beat Leitrim in the curtain-raiser at Croke Park by 1-12 to 0-7 to capture the All-Ireland title for the third time. However, the county senior side lost later that afternoon to Derry in the League summit.

Kerry won the All-Ireland Vocational Schools' and National League titles in 1973 and again in 1977. Galway completed the big double in 1965, the only other double in the same year.

Donegal won their tenth Ulster title last February with a comprehensive win over Cavan.

PATHS TO THE FINAL

Dún na nGall

Ulster:

Donegal 3-10; Fermanagh 1-6
Donegal 1-16; Cavan 0-4.

All-Ireland Semi-Final:

Donegal 1-15; Wicklow 0-9.

Facts about Donegal V.S.

- Donegal are appearing in their third final in a row.
- They were defeated by Cork in 1994 but won the 1995 final where they defeated Leitrim.
- Donegal is bidding for a fourth success at this level — they won in 1984, 1985 and 1995.
- David Green, Eamonn Reddin, Rory Sweeney, Gerard Canon, Barry Monaghan, Ciarán Brown, Aodh Brennan and substitute David Carroll played in last year's final.

Facts about Kerry V.S.

- The 1996 All-Ireland Club Champions, Laune Rangers, had a number of players who had won All-Ireland V.S. honours in their lineout: Michael Hassett (captain)

Ciarraí

Munster Final:

Kerry 1-16; Cork 1-9

All-Ireland Semi-Final:

Kerry 1-14; Leitrim 2-9.

and Liam Hassett (Junior-U16 — 1990); James O'Shea (Senior — 1986) and goalkeeper Peter Lyons (Senior — 1977 and 1978).

• Kerry V.S. has a total of nine All-Ireland titles to its credit — 1960, 1973, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1993.

• Prominent players who have won All-Ireland V.S. medals with Kerry include Tommy Doyle ('73), Ambrose O'Donovan ('77/'78), Anthony Gleeson ('86/'87), Pa Dennehy ('87), Declan O'Keeffe and John Cronin ('90), John Crowley ('92/'93), John Buckley ('92/'93), Charlie McCarthy ('93), Brian Clarke ('92), Denis Dwyer ('93).

• Kerry trainer, Billy Curtin, won an All-Ireland S.F.C. club medal in 1977 with Austin Stacks of Tralee.

An Elusive Double

For the second year in succession Donegal are bidding for the league and vocational titles. Twelve months ago they experienced mixed fortunes in pursuit of this particular double - a double that has proved a most elusive prize in recent years. It is 19 years since both titles rested in the one county which was Kerry in 1977 when the "Kingdom's" seniors and students overcame Dublin and Kildare respectively. That was Kerry's second time to record the feat, they having also 'doubled up' four years previously at the expense of Offaly (league) and Mayo (vocational). The only other instance of this double was when Galway were successful on both counts in 1965 - though three thousand miles separated the 'constituent parts', the league title being won in New York.

There were failed attempts at the double by Mayo in 1971 when the school's title was won and the league lost; by Mayo again in 1978 when defeat was their lot in both finals, and by Kerry in '82 and '87 when the spoils were divided. Donegal's unsuccessful bid in last year's finals marked the seventh venture in this particular quest, with the disappointment of the league decider being offset by the county's third vocational schools' title. Today, Donegal make a piece of football history as the first county to contest for both crowns in successive seasons. Last year, of course, they also were history-makers as the first Ulster county to feature in both finals on the same day.

Roll of Honour

- 8: Kerry:** 1973, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1993.
- 5: Tyrone:** 1967, 1969, 1970, 1988, 1989.
- 3: Donegal:** 1984, 1985, 1995.
- Derry:** 1979, 1980, 1981.
- Galway:** 1964, 1965, 1976.
- Mayo:** 1971, 1975, 1982.
- 2: Dublin City:** 1962, 1963.
- Wicklow:** 1974, 1983.
- Cork:** 1991, 1994.
- 1: Fermanagh:** 1966.
- Antrim:** 1968.
- Carlow:** 1972.
- Cork City:** 1961.

Back row (l-r): John Sugrue, Pa Murphy, Jonn Herimny, Kenneth O'Keefe, John Joe Quirke, Trevor McKenna, Enda Galvin, Sean Gleeson. Front row (l-r): Keith Moran, Niall Corbett, Michael Cahill, Liam Murphy (captain), Liam Boyle, Kristian O'Donovan, Jonathan Sparling.



Clashes in the past

12th April, 1986

All-Ireland Semi-Final

Kerry 2-8; Donegal 3-3

Donegal, All-Ireland champions of 1984 and 1985, met Kerry at the Dublin V.E.C. Grounds in Terenure. Donegal led 1-2 to 0-2 at half-time and by 3-2 to 0-2 five minutes into the second half. Kerry staged a great comeback as any Kerry Senior team ever and after 54 minutes trailed 3-2 to 2-4 and then went on to win by 2-8 to 3-3.

26th April, 1987

All-Ireland Final

Kerry 2-13; Donegal 3-9

A Danny 'Rua' Gallagher goal helped give Donegal a 1-4 to 0-0 start after 15 minutes at Croke Park. An

inspired display by Anthony Gleeson at midfield and a goal by Pa Dennehy before half-time enabled Kerry to trail by only 2-6 to 2-4 at the interval. In a second half thriller the sides were level with the final whistle beckoning. Dennehy was fouled on the 10 metre line. A pointed free and champions Kerry prevailed.

Saturday, 22nd April, 1995

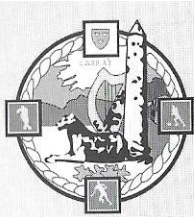
All-Ireland Semi-Final

Donegal 5-7; Kerry 2-11.

A 4-4 blitz by Donegal full forward Brian McLoughlin was the difference between the teams in this game played at Ballyhaunis. Despite a gallant Kerry second half comeback, Donegal prevailed. They are the current all-Ireland champions having defeated Leitrim in last year's final.

Derry's Distinction

The Vocational Schools' Championship is such a 'young' competition that there has been little scope for any county to establish telling statistics in respect of exceptional achievement. And though Derry were relative latecomers to the "voc" scene, they quickly left an imprint on the competition by winning three titles in succession - a feat previously unrecorded, or indeed, since. These wins in 1979, '80 and '81 were the only finals in which the Oak Leaf county was involved which leaves them with a 100% record of success - a distinction, incidentally, which they share with Fermanagh who won the only final they contested - against Kerry in 1966.



Ciarraí 3-9

Dathanna: Gorm is Bán

Fir Ionaid

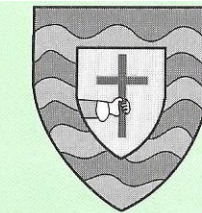
- (16) **Tim Cronin**
T. Ó Cróinín
(Rathmore C.S./Rathmore)
- (17) **Tom O'Sullivan**
T. Ó Sullleabháin
(Rathmore C.S./Rathmore)
- (18) **Joe Cronin**
S. Ó Cróinín
(Tralee C.C./Kerins O'Rahilly's)
- (19) **Brian Hickey**
B. Ó hÍcí
(Scoil Uí Chonaill/Skellig-Renard)
- (20) **Roger Harty**
R. Ó hArtaigh
(Waterville V.S./St. Michael's -
Filemore)
- (21) **Paul Galvin**
P. Ó Gealbháin
(Causeway C.S./Finuge)
- (22) **Shane Wickham**
S. Wickham
(Killarney C.C. Spa)
- Sub Goalie:
Tom Mitchell
T. Mistéil
(Castleisland C.C./Carrow)

Roghnóirí:
Billy Curtin (Tralee C.C.),
Willie Dowling
(Causeway Comprehensive),
Jerry Riney (Kenmare V.S.).

- 1**
KENNETH O'KEEFE
C. Ó Caoimh
(Rathmore C.S./Rathmore)
- 2**
KRISTIAN O'DONOVAN
C. Ó Donnabháin
(Gael Chólaiste Chiarraí/Austin Stacks)
- 3**
TREVOR McKENNA
T. Mac Cionaoith
(Causeway Comp./Finuge)
- 4**
NIALL CORBETT
N. Ó Coirbín
(Killorglin C.C./Fries)
- 5**
ENDAL GALVIN
E. Ó Gealbháin
(Causeway Comp./Finuge)
- 6**
JOHN JOE QUIRKE
S. S. Ó Coirc
(Killorglin C.C./Glenbeigh)
- 7**
PA MURPHY
P. Ó Murchú
(Killorglin C.C./Glenbeigh)
- 8**
JOHN SUGRUE
S. Ó Siochrú
(Waterville V.S./Skellig-Renard)
- 9**
JOHN HERLIHY
S. Ó hIarlatha
(Tralee C.C./Annascaul)
- 10**
KEITH MORAN
C. Ó Moráin
(Waterville V.S./Waterville)
- 11**
LIAM MURPHY
L. Ó Murchú (Capt.)
(Rathmore C.S./Gneeveguilla)
- 12**
BILLY O'SHEA
L. Ó Sé
(Killorglin C.C./Keel)
- 13**
JONATHAN SPARLING
S. Sparling
(Killarney C.C./Dr. Crokes)
- 14**
SEAN GLEESON
S. Ó Glasáin
(Kenmare V.S./Kilgarvan)
- 15**
MICHAEL CAHILL
M. Ó Cathail
(Rathmore C.S./Rathmore)

Dún na nGall 2-13

Dathanna: Buí is Dubh



Fir Ionaid

- 1**
DAVID GREENE
D. Ó hUaine
(Sacred Heart, Ballyshannon)
- 2**
SHANE GRIFFIN
S. Mac Gríofa
(Abbey Vocational School)
- 3**
EAMONN REDDIN
E. Ó Rodáin
(Buncrana Vocational School)
- 4**
DONAL MARTIN
D. Ó Máirtín (Capt.)
(Abbey Vocational School)
- 5**
OWNIE McGARVEY
O. Mac Gairbheith
(Gweedore Community School)
- 6**
RORY SWEENEY
R. Mac Suibhne
(Abbey Vocational School)
- 7**
GERARD CANNON
G. Mac Ceannannáin
(Carrick Vocational School)
- 8**
BARRY MONAGHAN
B. Ó Manacháin
(Abbey Vocational School)
- 9**
BARRY BROWN
B. Mac an Bhreithiún
(Carndonagh Community School)
- 10**
JOHN McALOONE
S. Mac Giolla Eoin
(Genties Comprehensive School)
- 11**
CIARÁN BROWN
C. Mac an Bhreithiún
(Carndonagh Community School)
- 12**
MICHAEL HEGARTY
M. Ó hEigeartaigh
(Carrick Vocational School)
- 13**
PETER McHUGH
P. Mac Aodha
(Genties Comprehensive School)
- 14**
AODH BRENNAN
A. Ó Braonáin
(Genties Comprehensive School)
- 15**
JOEL CARR
S. Mac Giolla Ceara
(Abbey Vocational School)

Roghnóirí:
John Joe O'Shea (Killybegs V.S.)
Manager,
Cathal Campbell (Killybegs V.S.)
Trainer,
Barry Campbell (Carrick V.S.),
Danny O'Brien (Buncrana V.S.).

CIARRAÍ

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

DÚN NA nGALL

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

Back row (l-r): Peter McHugh, Donal Martin, Aodh Brennan, Paul McGarry, David Greene, Shane Griffin, Eamon Reddin, Barry Monaghan.
Front row (l-r): Benny Quinn, Joel Carr, Rory Sweeney (captain), Ownie McGarvey, Shaun McHugh, Michael Hegarty, Gerard Cannon.



[Pic. Conor McGonagle]



Caighdeán Ard Peile Sna Comortais Ghairmscoileanna

Is lá mór i saol pheileadóirí ar bith a bheith ag imirt i bPáirc an Chrócaigh. Is lá ar leith é nuair is ar son do chontae atá tú san iomaíocht.

Mar sin, beidh gliondar mór ar na buachaillí ó Chiarraí agus ó Dhún na nGall inniu go háirithe nuair a bheidh slua mór i láthair. Tá buntáiste ag na Conallaiigh mar go mbeidh na sinsir óna gcontae san iomaíocht i gceolbhluiche na Léige Church & General agus leath den slua, ar a laghad, le tacaíocht a léiriú dóibh.

Bhain na Conallaiigh an chraobh anuraidh agus ar an mbealach chloígh siad céili imeartha an lae inniu, Chiarraí, sa chluiche leathcheannais. Tá foirne Chiarraí faoi láthair, ag gach leibhéal, ag déanamh thar cionn. Tá craobh na gClub sinsir bainte acu agus cúpla seachtain ó shoin bhain buachaillí on Scoil Idirmheánach, Cill Orglain, craobh na gColáistí den chéad uair. Tabharfaidh an dá bhua sin misneach agus ardú meánam d'óige na nGairmscoileanna.

Tá buíochas mór tuille ag múinteoirí na tíre, idir bhunscolaíocht, mheánscolaíocht, ghairmscolaíocht agus tríú leibhéal, as an gcaoi a ullmhaithear na foirne do na comortais égsúla agus go gcoinnítear spéis an aos léinn sna cluichí náisiúnta. Go maire siad.

Maidir le toradh an chluiche seo inniu ceaptar go mbeidh mian níos láidre i mbuachaillí na Ríochta agus go mbeidh an lá leo. Ach beidh cuimhne go deo ag an dá fhoireann ar an lá iontach sa staid náisiúnta, Páirc an Chrócaigh.

The Forgotten First

The record of Vocational Schools' finals which has been accepted as complete dates from 1961 when Cork City beat Offaly in the final at Templemore. The record, however, is incomplete as it fails to mention the 1960 final between Kerry and Carlow which actually launched the competition - or, at least, the finals of the competition.

Coverage of Vocational Schools' football or hurling games was scanty in the early years, but the Carlow-Kerry final did receive - by the standards of the time - a fair amount of editorial interest. According to reports the event at Nenagh attracted a big crowd which included Central Council members, Michael O'Rourke (Kerry) Paddy Leahy (Tipperary) and Frank Sheehy Chairman of the Kerry County Board, all three of whom expressed delight at the standard of play.

As to the game itself, Kerry were the early pacemakers, led by 1-4 to 1-2 at the interval and were eight points ahead at the end of the third quarter. However, a closing rally which featured some excellent exchanges, saw Carlow narrow the gap, but Kerry held on to win by 1-10 to 2-4.

Why this final is not included in the official record which appears to date from the early seventies, is not clear, but since it did take place - and obviously with official approval - there can hardly be any reason why it has been omitted, other than by an oversight.

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Doire



The Derry team which defeated Mayo in the semi-final

Back row (l-r): Dermot McNicholl, David O'Neill, Anthony Tohill, Jonathan Kelly, Tony Scullion, Séamus Downey, Joe Brolly, Brian McGilligan.

Front row (l-r): Enda Gormley, Gary McGill, Karl Diamond, Henry Downey (captain), Kieran McKeever, Fergal McCusker, Damien Cassidy.

Captain Henry Downey

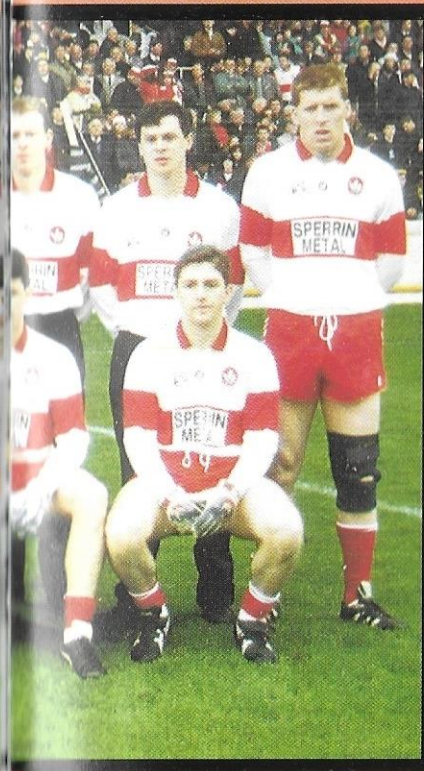
The Lavey club man will complete a rare treble if he leads Derry to a successful defence of the Church & General National Football League title. He captained the county to the 1991-92 League crown and led the Oak Leaf county to

their only Sam Maguire Cup success nearly three years ago.

It was as a hurler that Downey first made his name with Derry. He joined the county senior football team on a regular basis in 1991 and has developed into one

of the best half backs in the game.

A former St. Patrick's, Maghera, Colleges' player, Downey won an All-Ireland club medal in 1991 and was centre half back in the 1993 Bank of Ireland All-Stars team.



Player Profiles

Jonathan Kelly (Magherafelt). 22-years-old. 6'2". 12st.10lbs. Student.

Kieran McKeever (Dungiven). 28-years-old. 5'7". 12st. Joiner.

Gary Coleman (Magherafelt). 23-years-old. 5'9". 11st.7lbs. Postman.

Tony Scullion (Ballinascreen). 34-years-old. 5'11". 12st.7lbs. County Coaching Officer

Karl Diamond (Bellaghy). 23-years-old. 5'9". 12st. Student.

Henry Downey (Lavey). 29-years-old. 5'9". 12st.3lbs. Teacher.

Fergal McCusker (Glen). 26-years-old. 5'11". 12st.7lbs. Bank Official.

Anthony Tohill (Swatragh). 24-years-old. 6'4". 15st. Student.

Brian McGilligan (Dungiven). 32-years-old. 6'3". 14st.7lbs. Site Manager.

Sean Martin Lockhart (Banagher). 19-years-old. 6'0". 12st. Student.

Joe Brolly (Dungiven). 26-years-old. 5'10". 12st.2lbs. Barrister.

Seamus Downey (Lavey). 28-years-old. 6'1". 13st.11lbs. Teacher.

Enda Gormley (Glen). 30-years-old. 5'10". 12st.11lbs. Finance Company Rep.

Damien McCusker (Glen). 29-years-old. 6'1". 14st. Civil Servant.

Eamonn Burns (Ballinascreen). 24-years-old. 6'1". 13st.4lbs. Student.

Dermot Dougan (Newbridge). 23-years-old. 5'11". 12st.2lbs. Student.

John McGurk (Lavey). 29-years-old. 5'7". 11st. Accountant.

Stephen McLarnon (Castledawson). 22-years-old. 5'8". 11st.7lbs. Student.

Danny Quinn (Bellaghy). 29-years-old. 5'11". 14st. Teacher.

Gary McGill (Glen). 27-years-old. 5'10". 12st.8lbs. Plumber.

Colin McEldowney (Slaughtneil). 22-years-old. 5'6". 11st.

Declan Bateson (Ballinderry). 24-years-old. 5'9". 11st.7lbs. Chemist.



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Derry know what is needed for success

Derry will have plenty of cause for celebration if they set the seal on a splendid comeback by achieving the county's first-ever successful defence of the National Football League title.

The championship scene rarely looked brighter for the Oak Leaf county than after their win over Donegal in last year's League final for a third national crown in three years. They won the 1991-92 League and, of course, captured the Sam Maguire Cup for the first time in 1993.

But following a good first round win over Armagh in the North, Derry were beaten in the Ulster semi-final by Tyrone and that set-back was followed by a poor start to the current League. Defeats by Tyrone and Kerry did not augur well for a good League campaign, but here are the champions not only back again in the summit but in the role of favourites in the view of many keen

students of the game.

After their poor start they won their remaining games in division I, except a sixth round tie at Ballybofey, where they played a draw with Donegal.

Derry received something of a fright in their quarter-final against Cavan at Clones in late March. They led at one stage in the second half by four points, but in the end had to rely on an injury-time point by Brian McGilligan for a hard-earned 0-12 to 0-11 win.

GOOD START

It is often said that a "good start is half the battle" and that certainly proved the case for the League champions in last month's semi-final with Mayo. They dictated matters in the first half and it took four late points in around four minutes near the close to bring Mayo back into the race as they trailed by 0-6 to 0-4.

Derry again opened brightly in the second half. The half

when the ball slipped from the hands of a Mayo defender and Joe Brolly was on hand to collect. He went off on a solo run before sending the ball right footed to the net for the only goal of the game.

The League champions were firmly on the road to victory after that. Mayo battled bravely following the set-back but in the end were well beaten by 1-12 to 0-7.

Anthony Tohill, in his first full game since last year's Ulster semi-final, was in top form at midfield for Derry. Brolly proved the inspiration of the attack and finished as the team's top scorer with 1-2.

Kieran McKeever and last year's final captain Tony Scullion were other giants for Derry. However, the team gave a good performance overall and one that must encourage optimism about their prospects of writing another chapter of history in this decade.

The fact, too, that they have a very experienced team, with players who know what is required for success at this level, is another vital-plus for the holders.

GOOD LUCK TO DONEGAL

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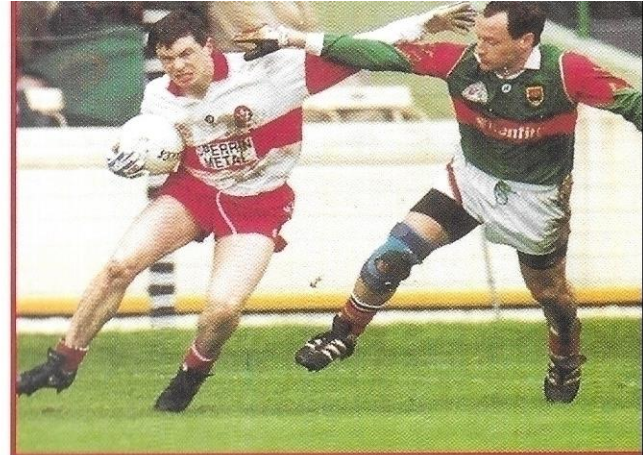
BROLLY SETS PACE FOR DERRY

Joe Broolly sets the pace for Derry in finding the target in matches in the series so far. He scored in all his eight outings in the League. The Dungiven man missed the concluding game of 1995 against Laois at Ballinascreen.

Broolly scored 1-2 against Clare at Ennis as Derry got back on the winning trail in November, 0-5 against Meath at Celtic Park in February and 1-2 against Mayo. He has recorded 2-20 (26 points) so far.

No member of the Derry or Donegal sides has scored more than one goal in the League so far.

Back to individual returns by Derry footballers and Rory Boylan leads the way in this regard with 1-4 against Laois at Ballinscreen at the end of November.



Joe Broolly (Doire) tries to get past Dermot Flanagan (Maigh Eo) in the semi-final.

Scoring Trailblazers

SCORING DISTINCTION FOR BOYLE?

Tony Boyle, who has been such an influential figure in Donegal's march to their second successive Church and General National Football League final, is in line today to become the only player to score in every single round of the competition, from the opening series to the final.

In his nine outings so far in the League he scored 2-32 (38 points) at an average of 4.22 points a game. Boyle had his best match

score so far at 1-5 in the win over Kildare at Ballyshannon in late February that earned Donegal the Division 1 title on scoring averages. The goal was from a penalty.

That return against the All-Whites is also the best by a Donegal footballer in the current series.

On his last appearance at headquarters Boyle hit 0-7 for what ranks as the second highest return by a Donegal footballer.

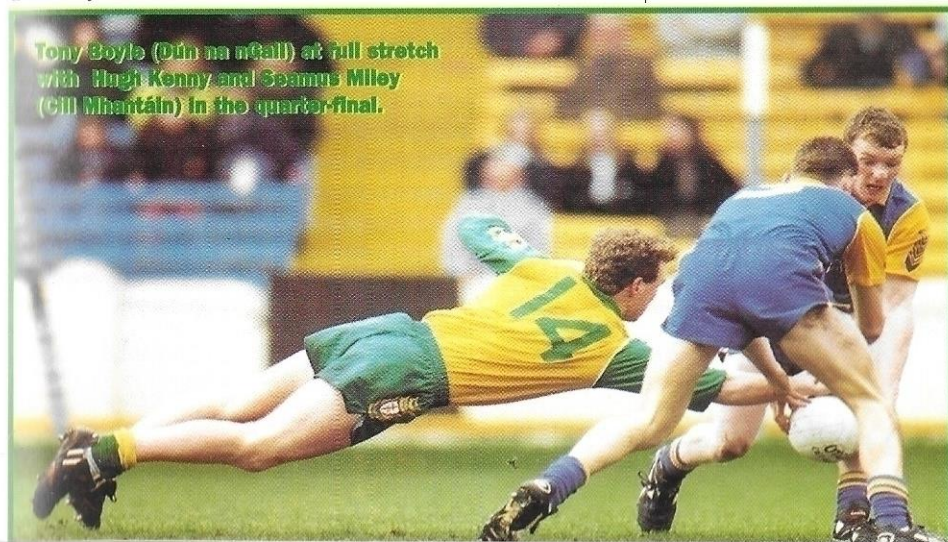
Brian Roper celebrated his first senior game at Croke Park by

finding the net against Wicklow in a quarter-final at the end of March. Declan Bonner got Donegal's second goal, their last of the current league so far.

Donegal have still to collect a goal in a national senior final. The beat Dublin by 0-18 to 0-14 in that historic Sam Maguire Cup win of 1992 and did not find the net in their two games with Dublin in the 1992-93 final and replay and in last year's decider against Derry.

The did not concede a goal in any of those League games either.

Tony Boyle (Dún na nGall) at full stretch with Hugh Kenny and Seamus Milley (Cill Mhantáin) in the quarter-final.



TOP SCORERS

Before last September's All-Ireland Final, Cork's Colin Corkery held the top scorers spot, but Peter Canavan's 0-11 in the championship decider forced the Leesider to settle for the runners-up position. A similar fate is unlikely to befall the Corkonian today, for although his overall lead is just three points, the gap to one of today's protagonists, Donegal's Tony Boyle, is 13 points.

In joint second place are Dara Ó Cinnéide of Kerry, and Cavan's Ronan Carolan. The Breffni man is showing steady improvement as he was fourth two years ago, and third last season. Kevin O'Brien of Wicklow and Longford's Dessie Barry make up the top five.

Surprisingly, only two of last year's Top 20 are present again, as Corkery (joint 11th last year) is currently first, and as already mentioned, the steadily improving Carolan. However, Derry's Joe Brolly (joint 16th two years ago) has returned to the chart in the exact same position, but the Dungiven ace is likely to improve on that position this afternoon.

The Top 21 scorers for this year's league are:

Colin Corkery (Cork)	1-48 (51 points)
Dara Ó Cinnéide (Kerry)	3-39 (48)
Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	6-30 (48)
Kevin O'Brien (Wicklow)	3-37 (46)
Dessie Barry (Longford)	4-33 (45)
Colin Kelly (Louth)	1-37 (40)
Declan Smyth (Monaghan)	3-31 (40)
Tony Boyle (Donegal)	2-31 (37)
John McManus (Antrim)	1-33 (36)
Trevor Giles (Meath)	2-29 (35)
Gerard Cavlan (Tyrone)	2-27 (33)
David Reynolds (Offaly)	1-29 (32)
Niall Buckley (Kildare)	0-29
Luke Dolan (Roscommon)	2-23 (29)
Kieran McManus (Offaly)	3-18 (27)
Joe Brolly (Derry)	2-20 (26)
Niall Finnegan (Galway)	2-20 (26)
Brendan Cummins (Tipperary)	0-26
Gene Bohan (Leitrim)	0-24
Paul Taylor (Sligo)	0-24
Noel Dineen (Roscommon)	5-9 (24)

INDIVIDUAL FEATS

Last season the top individual feat for an hour's endeavour was 2-5, and so it is this season with the eleven-point total again good enough for the premier position. Roscommon's Nigel Dineen assumes the mantle held by Pat Gavin of Limerick last year. In joint second place are Colin Corkery, Declan Smyth and Kevin O'Brien, each of whom recorded 1-7. The rest of the Top 19 all recorded nine-point totals.

Ronan Carolan, with three appearances, is most often on the list, but he is still one short of Conan Daye's four from last season. Corkery and Dara Ó Cinnéide are the only other players to make more than one showing. Last year's top-shot Gavin returns to the list, as does John McManus and Corkery.

Only one performance in the knock-out stages registers, and Ó Cinnéide compiled his 0-9 in 90 (extra-time v Cork) rather than 60 minutes. The full list of the top 19 individual feats for the 1995/96 league are:

Nigel Dineen (Roscommon)	2-5 v Antrim	Round 5 at Roscommon
Colin Corkery (Cork)	1-7 v Armagh	Round 7 at Armagh
Declan Smyth (Monaghan)	1-7 v Galway	Round 5 at Clones
Kevin O'Brien (Wicklow)	1-7 v Tipperary	Round 4 at Thurles
Colin Corkery (Cork)	0-9 v Leitrim	Round 6 at Carrick-on-Shannon
Dara Ó Cinnéide (Kerry)	0-9 v Cork	Q/F at Páirc Uí Chaoimh
Maurice Sheridan (Mayo)	0-9 v Roscommon	Round 3 at Ballina
John McManus (Antrim)	0-9 v Wexford	Round 2 at Casement Park
Pat Gavin (Limerick)	0-9 v Longford	Round 1 at Askeaton
Dara Ó Cinnéide (Kerry)	1-6 v Donegal	Round 4 at Ballyshannon
Gerard Cavlan (Tyrone)	1-6 v Derry	Round 1 at Omagh
Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	1-6 v Leitrim	Round 2 at Carrick-on-Shannon
Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	1-6 v Westmeath	Round 3 at Breffni Park
Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	1-6 v Dublin	Round 6 at Parnell Park
Niall Finnegan (Galway)	1-6 v Sligo	Round 2 at Tuam
Luke Dolan (Roscommon)	1-6 v Wexford	Round 4 at Roscommon
Dessie Barry (Longford)	1-6 v Wicklow	Round 2 at Longford
Johnny Nevin (Carlow)	2-3 v Kilkenny	Round 6 at Ballyragget
Trevor Smullen (Longford)	2-3 v London	Round 8 at Longford

Donegal Bid to Secure Elusive Jackpot

Donegal have a wealth of top-class experience as well as good form as they bid to capture a first Church and General National Football League title.

Eight of the side that beat Cork with a late, late point from play by John Bán Gallagher in the semi-final last month won All-Ireland senior medals in 1992 and also appeared in Donegal's League finals against Dublin (draw and replay) and Derry. This know-how should prove a big asset in this latest bid to write a further chapter of football history.

Most of the other members of the side have also considerable big game experience and Donegal will not be unnerved by the big occasion.

They did not help their cause in the semi-final by failing to turn good opportunities in front of goal into scores. They had some bad wides in the second half as they took the game to Cork, and should have won more convincingly than their one point margin.

However, the North-West men still showed character in staging a late rally when it appeared Cork had ensured a replay with a Colin Corkery point from a 45 metres free in the 60th minute. That score left the teams level.

But Donegal powered back from the knockout. Martin Crossan won possession and initiated a move that ended with John Bán Gallagher rifling over a magnificent point from over 45 metres to put the Ulster side back into the final on a scoreline of 0-10 to 0-9.

ANXIOUS MOMENTS

Had Donegal made better use of their opportunities, especially in the second half, they would not have had to endure so many anxious moments coming up to the end. Overall, however, they deserved their victory as they dominated matters for most of the second half.

Martin Shovlin was having one of his best games for Donegal until he had to retire injured. He did much to

ensure that the defence gave the Cork forwards little room to manoeuvre.

John Joe Doherty and Barry McGowan were others to impress at the back.

Midfielder Brian Murray, Tony Boyle, again the team's top scorer with seven points, and comparative newcomer Brian Roper were others who played big roles in shaping Donegal's third semi-final success of the nineties.

Donegal have been the most consistent team in League play in the present decade, having reached the knockout stages each year since 1990. They also did well in the divisional series to bounce back from a shock Ulster championship defeat by Monaghan last June to take the Division I title on scoring averages.

Victory today would set the seal on their endeavours so far. They look well equipped to face up to this latest challenge in a cool, assured mood and with genuine hopes of going one better than in their last two attempts in finals.

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Doire

Dathanna: Dearg is Bán

Fir Ionaid

- (16) **Damien McCusker**
D. Mac Oscair
(Glen)
- (17) **Eamonn Burns**
E. Ó Broin
(Ballinascreen)
- (18) **Dermot Dougan**
D. Ó Duagáin
(Newbridge)
- (19) **John McGurk**
S. Mag Oirc
(Lavey)
- (20) **Stephen McLarnon**
S. Mac Giolla Earnáin
(Castledawson)
- (21) **Danny Quinn**
D. Ó Cuinn
(Bellaghy)
- (22) **Gary McGill**
G. Mac an Ghoill
(Glen)
- (23) **Colm McEldowney**
C. Mac Giolla Domhnaigh
(Slaughtneil)
- (24) **Declan Bateson**
D. Bateson
(Ballinderry)

Roghnóirí:
Brian Mullins (Manager),
Frank Kearney (Glen),
Anthony McGurk (Steelstown),
Eugene Young (Moneymore).

1
JONATHAN KELLY
S. Ó Ceallaigh
(Magherafelt)

2
KIERAN McKEEVER
C. Mac Íomhair
(Dungiven)

3
GARY COLEMAN
G. Ó Colmáin
(Magherafelt)

4
TONY SCULLION
A. Ó Scolláin
(Ballinascreen)

5
KARL DIAMOND
C. Ó Diomáin
(Bellaghy)

6
HENRY DOWNEY
A. Mac Giolla Domhnaigh (Capt.)
(Lavey)

7
FERGAL MCCUSKER
F. Mac Oscair
(Glen)

8
ANTHONY TOHILL
A. Ó Tuathail
(Swatragh)

9
BRIAN MCGILLIGAN
B. Mac Giollagáin
(Dungiven)

10
DUINE EILE

11
DUINE EILE

12
SEAN M. LOCKHART
S. M. Locard
(Banagher)

13
JOE BROLLY
S. Ó Brolaigh
(Dungiven)

14
SÉAMUS DOWNEY
S. Mac Giolla Domhnaigh
(Lavey)

15
ENDA GORMLEY
E. Ó Garmaile
(Glen)

DOIRE

1adh Leath

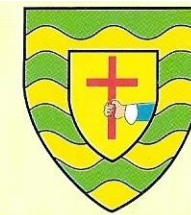
2adh Leath

IOMLÁN

Cúil	Cúilíní	Seacháí	45m	Saor Ciceanna

Dún na nGall

Dathanna: Uaithne, Ór is Bán



Fir Ionaid

- (16) **Paul Callaghan**
P. Ó Ceallcháin
(Beart)
- (17) **Damien Diver**
D. Ó Duibhir
(Ard an Ratha)
- (18) **James McHugh**
S. Mac Aoidh
(Cill Chartha)
- (19) **Eamon MacMenamin**
E. Mac Meanman
(Mac Cumhailís)
- (20) **Paddy Cunningham**
P. Mac Cuinneagáin
(Naomh Columba)
- (21) **Gerard Kelly**
G. Ó Ceallaigh
(Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon)
- (22) **Dessie MacNamara**
D. Mac Conmara
(Bundoran)
- (23) **Neil McCready**
N. Mac Riada
(Aodh Ruadh, Coill na gCuirdeán)
- (24) **Seamus McGinty**
S. Mac Feinneachta
(Mac Cumhailís)

Roghnóirí:
P.J. McGowan (Manager),
Patsy McGonigle (Trainer),
Tom Cormack,
Seamus Gallagher.

1
GARY WALSH
G. Breatnach
(Burren)

2
JOHN CUNNINGHAM
S. Mac Cuinneagáin
(Na Cealla Beaga)

3
MATT GALLAGHER
M. Ó Gallchóir
(Naomh Bríd)

4
JOHN JOE DOHERTY
S. S. Ó Dochartaigh
(Naomh Columba)

5
BARRY MCGOWAN
B. Mac Gabhainn
(Na Cealla Beaga)

6
MARK CROSSAN
M. Mac Chrossáin
(Naomh Adhamháin)

7
MARTIN SHOVLIN
M. Ó Seibhleáin
(Naomh Ultan)

8
JAMES RUANE
S. Mac Ruain
(Bundoran)

9
BRIAN MURRAY
B. Ó Muiri
(An Stait Sheirbhís)

10
JOHN BÁN GALLAGHER
S. Bán Ó Gallchóir
(Na Cealla Beaga)

11
NOEL HEGARTY
N. Ó hEigearthaigh (Capt.)
(Naomh Columba)

12
PADDY HEGARTY
P. Ó hEigearthaigh
(Naomh Columba)

13
BRIAN ROPER
B. Ó Roper
(Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon)

14
TONY BOYLE
A. Ó Baoill
(An Clochán Liath)

15
MANUS BOYLE
M. Ó Baoil
(Na Cealla Beaga)

DÚN NA nGALL

1adh Leath

2adh Leath

IOMLÁN

Cúil	Cúilíní	Seacháí	45m	Saor Ciceanna



Paths to the Final



Doire

Round 1 at Omagh: Lost to Tyrone 0-8 to 1-7.

Scorers - Eamonn Burns 0-5, Joe Brolly 0-1, Brian McCormack 0-1, Dermot Dougan 0-1.

Round 2 at Ballinascreen: Lost to Kerry by 0-7 to 2-15.

Scorers - Eamonn Burns 0-3, Joe Brolly 0-3, Sean M.Lockhart 0-1.

Round 3 at Ennis: Beat Clare by 2-13 to 2-8.

Scorers - Joe Brolly 1-2, Damien Barton 0-4, Colin McEldowney 1-1, Rory Boylan 0-3, Paddy Downey 0-2, Karl Diamond 0-1.

Round 4 at Ballinascreen: Beat Laois by 2-7 to 0-9.

Scorers - Rory Boylan 1-5, Colin McEldowney 1-0, Dermot Dougan 0-1, Damien Barton 0-1.

Round 5 at Celtic Park: Beat Kildare by 1-6 to 0-7.

Scorers - Joe Brolly 0-4, Damien Cassidy 1-0, Colin McEldowney 0-1, Enda Gormley 0-1.

Round 6 at Ballybofey: Drew with Donegal 0-10 all.

Scorers - Eamonn Burns 0-3, Joe Brolly 0-2, Damien Cassidy 0-2, Karl Diamond 0-1, John Mulholland 0-1, Seamus Downey 0-1.

Round 7 at Celtic Park: Beat Meath by 1-11 to 1-8.

Scorers - Gary McGill 1-2, Joe Brolly 0-4, Seamus Downey 0-3, Rory Boylan 0-1, Declan Bateson 0-1.

Quarter-Final at Clones: Beat Cavan by 0-12 to 0-11.

Scorers - Seamus Downey 0-5, Joe Brolly 0-2, Fergal McCusker 0-1, Dermot Heaney 0-1, Brian McGilligan 0-1, Gary McGill 0-1, Enda Gormley 0-1.

Semi-Final at Croke Park: Beat Mayo by 1-12 to 0-7.

Scorers - Joe Brolly 1-2, Anthony Tohill 0-4, Enda Gormley 0-2, Gary McGill 0-1, Damien Cassidy 0-1, Seamus Downey 0-1, Kieran McKeever 0-1.

Total Scored 7-86 (107 points); Total Conceded 6-82 (100).

Scorers - Joe Brolly 2-20, Rory Boylan 1-9, Eamonn Burns 0-11, Seamus Downey 0-10, Colin McEldowney 2-2, Gary McGill 1-4, Damien Cassidy 1-3, Damien Barton 0-5, Anthony Tohill 0-4, Enda Gormley 0-4, Karl Diamond 0-2, Dermot Dougan 0-2, Paddy Downey 0-2, John Mulholland 0-1, Sean M.Lockhart 0-1, Declan Bateson 0-1, Brian McCormack 0-1, Fergal McCusker 0-1, Dermot Heaney 0-1, Kieran McKeever 0-1, Brian McGilligan 0-1.

Dún na nGall

Round 1 at Ennis: Beat Clare by 3-8 to 0-8.

Scorers - Tony Boyle 1-1, Eamon McMenamin 1-1, Manus Boyle 0-3, Brian Murray 1-0, James McHugh 0-1, John Duffy 0-1, Niall McCreehy 0-1.

Round 2 at Ballybofey: Beat Tyrone by 0-16 to 0-7.

Scorers - Manus Boyle 0-6, James McHugh 0-4, Tony Boyle 0-2, John Ban Gallagher 0-2, Eamon McMenamin 0-1, John Gildea 0-1.

Round 3 at Portlaoise: Beat Laois by 1-10 to 0-8.

Scorers - Manus Boyle 0-4, Eamon McMenamin 1-1, Tony Boyle 0-2, James Ruane 0-2, John Gildea 0-1.

Round 4 at Ballyshannon: Lost to Kerry 0-6 to 1-11.

Scorers - John Gildea 0-2, Tony Boyle 0-1, Manus Boyle 0-1, John Duffy 0-1, Barry McGowan 0-1.

Round 5 at Navan: Drew with Meath 0-10 to 2-4.

Scorers - Tony Boyle 0-4, John Duffy 0-3, Eamon McMenamin 0-1, John Ban Gallagher 0-1, James Ruane 0-1.

Round 6 at Ballybofey: Drew with Donegal 0-10 all.

Scorers - Tony Boyle 0-5, John Duffy 0-3, Eamon McMenamin 0-1, Noel Hegarty 0-1.

Round 7 at Ballyshannon: Drew with Kildare 1-8 to 0-11.

Scorers - Tony Boyle 1-5, James Ruane 0-1, Barry McGowan 0-1, Barry Roper 0-1.

Quarter-Final at Croke Park: Beat Wicklow by 2-12 to 1-8.

Scorers - Declan Bonnar 1-4, Tony Boyle 0-5, Barry Roper 1-0, Martin Shovlin 0-1, James Ruane 0-1, Manus Boyle 0-1.

Semi-Final at Croke Park: Beat Cork by 0-10 to 0-9.

Scorers: Tony Boyle 0-6, Barry Roper 0-1, John Ban Gallagher 0-1, Paddy Hegarty 0-1, Manus Boyle 0-1.

Total Scored 7-90 (111 pts); Total Conceded 4-76 (88).

Scorers - Tony Boyle 2-31, Manus Boyle 0-16, Eamon McMenamin 2-5, John Duffy 0-8, Declan Bonnar 1-4, James McHugh 0-5, James Ruane 0-5, Barry Roper 1-2, John Ban Gallagher 0-4, John Gildea 0-4, Brian Murray 1-0, Barry McGowan 0-2, Noel Hegarty 0-1, Niall McCreehy 0-1, Martin Shovlin 0-1, Paddy Hegarty 0-1.

LAST MEETING

Brolly Steps In to Earn Derry a Draw

Donegal and Derry last met in the Church & General National Football League at Ballybofey in February when the introduction of Joe Brolly from the substitutes bench after 41 minutes proved a big factor in earning the visitors a draw — 0-10 each — before an attendance of 5,000.

Derry, with Brolly and Tony Scullion among those on the substitutes bench, started promisingly and led by 0-3 to 0-1 early in the game. But Donegal, with Tony Boyle to the fore, gradually exerted a dominance and were 0-7 to 0-4 ahead at the interval.

Within four minutes of the restart Donegal were five points clear, but shortly afterwards Brolly was sent into the game and eight minutes from time the scores were level at 0-9 each.

Coming up to the close Tony Boyle had Donegal a point ahead, but left full forward Colm McGurk levelled for Derry to ensure that both counties kept in the race for places in the knockout stages.

Tony Boyle had an outstanding game for Donegal and also contributed five points. John Duffy at left full forward, Noel Hegarty and Damien Diver in the half back line were other stars for Donegal.

Eamonn Burns scored three points from frees for Derry. Dermot McNicholl, Henry Downey and, of course, Brolly after his introduction were to the fore for Derry.

Generally, a draw was a good result to a keenly contested and always interesting game.

DONEGAL: G. Walsh, M. Crossan, M. Gallagher, S. McGinty, D. Diver, Noel Hegarty, M. Shovlin, B. Murray, J. Bán Gallagher, E. McMenamin, J. Gildea, J. Ruane, N. McCreehy, T. Boyle, J. Duffy.

Substitutes: Paddy Hegarty for Murray. B. Roper for McCreehy.

DERRY: J. Kelly, K. McJeevery, P. Downey, S. McLarnon, S. Lockhart, H. Downbey, K. Diamond, J. Mulholland, D. Quinn, D. Cassidy, E. Burns, d. McNicholl, G. McGonigle, Seamus Downey, C. McGurk.

Substitutes J. Brolly for McGonigle. B. McGilligan for Mulholland.

National Football League Title Winners

15:	Kerry:	1928, 1929, 1931, 1932, 1959, 1961, 1963, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1982, 1984.
10:	Mayo:	1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1941, 1949, 1954, 1970.
8:	Dublin:	1953, 1955, 1958, 1976, 1978, 1987, 1991, 1993.
7:	Meath:	1933, 1946, 1951, 1975, 1988, 1990, 1994.
4:	Cork:	1952, 1956, 1980, 1989.
	Down:	1960, 1962, 1968, 1983.
	Galway:	1940, 1957, 1965, 1981.
3:	Derry:	1947, 1992, 1995.
	New York:	1950, 1964, 1967.
2:	Laois:	1927, 1986.
1:	Cavan:	1948.
	Longford:	1966.
	Monaghan:	1985.
	Roscommon:	1979.

Note: The National Football League was suspended from 1942 to 1945 inclusive due to World War II.

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Walsh and Tohill can brighten final scene

Gary Walsh, who continues to keep a sound goal for Donegal, and Anthony Tohill, back again to prompt Derry with his talents, are just two of the players who may well provide some of the highlights of this appealing Church and General National Football League final.

Walsh, who tops the six-foot mark, has been an inter-county senior for around eleven years, but continues to be one of the most dependable in the "loneliest position on the field".

A former Donegal minor and under-21 player, the Burren (Down) club man, was one of the stars of the side that gave Donegal its greatest-ever sporting boost by capturing the Sam Maguire Cup in 1992. He also won a Bank of Ireland All-Star trophy that year.

Walsh played with Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon, before joining his present club and has also worn the Ulster jersey with distinction. He won an interprovincial medal in 1991.

Walsh is having another good League season and is hoping for better fortune than in his last final appearances when he was on the losing sides to Dublin and Derry.



Anthony Tohill (Doire) is tackled by Colm McMenamón (Maigh Eo) in the semi-final.

It is a measure of Tohill's contribution to Derry's 1994-95 National League title win that he was included in the inaugural Powerscreen All-Stars football team in December. That, despite the fact that he did not play in a competitive game with Derry after their loss to Tyrone in an Ulster semi-final in June.

Tohill is a brilliant graduate from that famed Derry nursery, St. Patrick's, Maghera. He won an All-

Ireland Colleges' medal in 1989 — St. Patrick's first national crown — and added an All-Ireland minor souvenir to his credit later that year.

The 6ft.4ins. midfielder spent some time in Australia playing Rules football. On his return home he helped Derry to the 1991-92 National League title, scoring the late, late goal against Tyrone that set his side up for a winning rally. He was also Derry's top scorer for the series with 2-20.

Since then the Swatragh club man has won an All-Ireland senior medal an All-Star trophy (1993) and a Sigerson Cup (Universities' Championship) medal with Queen's.

On his first full game in the League against Mayo he had a top-class match and is a player many in the Oak Leaf County look to for inspiration.

Gary Walsh and Anthony Tohill are not only key players in this final, but two of the exciting personality — plus footballers that the game needs to keep ahead of its competitors.



Donegal's Gary Walsh

The Failure of Champions

Twenty-two years ago Kerry won their 12th National League title when they retained their crown for a third successive year with a six-point win over Roscommon. Since then three other titles have gone to 'the Kingdom' but none of these was back-to-back, and from 1975 to the present day no county - and no fewer than eight have tried, most of them more than once - has managed to retain what has surely become the most elusive trophy in the gaelic calendar. A few came close to holding on to it for a second twelve-month stint, but sooner or later they were smitten by the bogey that has ensured a change of 'ownership' at the end of every season. Twenty-one attempts have been made since 1975 and here, briefly, is how they all came to grief.

1974/75 - Kerry:

The holders qualified for the quarter-final, but were well beaten (0-11 to 0-6) by resurgent Meath at Croke Park.

1975/76 - Meath:

Started on a losing note and defeats by Galway and Derry put them out of contention.

1976/77 - Dublin:

Beat Cork, Kildare and Galway, and drew with Meath to qualify for the semi-final. Beat Mayo in the semi-final but lost the final to Kerry.

1977/78 - Kerry:

Defeats by Dublin, Cork and a drawn game with Kildare saw them fail to get to the knock-out stages.

1978/79 - Dublin:

Losing to Kildare, Cork and Kerry meant they had no chance of staying in contention and finished well down the table.

1979/80 - Roscommon:

Despite two unexpected defeats by Down and Armagh, they rallied to reach the quarter-final only to lose to Kerry by 1-5 to 1-8.

1980/81 - Cork:

Scored good wins over Down, Kildare and Dublin before fading out of the race.

1981/82 - Galway:

Never reproduced the form of the previous season and finished second from bottom in Division One and were relegated.

1982/83 - Kerry:

Started their retention bid with a win over Derry, but were subsequently defeated by Armagh, Dublin and Cork and did not feature in the closing stages.

1983/84 - Down:

Did well to share second place in the Division One table with Meath. Beat Tyrone in the quarter-final but lost the semi-final to Kerry by 1-6 to 0-12.

1984/85 - Kerry:

Lost to Kildare and Armagh; recovered to beat Galway and draw with Meath and Tyrone, but dropped out of the race when beaten by Down.

1985/86 - Monaghan:

Despite a heavy defeat at the hands of Down in Round 2, came back strongly to qualify for the final in which they narrowly lost to Laois by 2-5 to 2-6.

1986/87 - Laois:

Started well in defence of their title, before losing four games which saw them finish in-fifth place in Division Two.

1987/88 - Dublin:

Topped Division One with 12 points. Beat Longford (quarter-final) and Monaghan (semi-final) but lost the final on a replay to Meath.

1988/89 - Meath:

Lost six of their seven games. Beat Down in the last game but were relegated to Division Two.

1989/90 - Cork:

Beat Cavan, Dublin, Derry, Donegal and Kerry; drew with Armagh to qualify for the quarter-final in which they beat Kildare. Lost semi-final to Meath.

1990/91 - Meath:

Beat Cork, Donegal and Down. Lost to Roscommon, Armagh, and Kerry, and drew with Dublin to finish sixth in the Division One table.

1991/92 - Dublin:

Recorded good wins over Galway, Armagh, Mayo, and lost to Tyrone and Cork (five game series). Beat Galway in a play-off and Donegal in the quarter-final. Lost the semi-final to Tyrone.

1992/93 - Derry:

Beat Dublin, Wexford, Limerick, Sligo, Antrim and Louth (lost to Galway). Lost quarter-final to Donegal at Breffni Park.

1993/94 - Dublin:

Four wins (over Clare, Kerry, Mayo and Derry); two draws (Kildare and Down) put Dublin in the semi-final in which they were shocked by Armagh (2-13 to 1-9) at Breffni Park.

1994/95 - Meath:

Beat Dublin, Kildare and Kerry. Lost to Down, Derry, Donegal and Laois. Failed to qualify for the knock-out stages.

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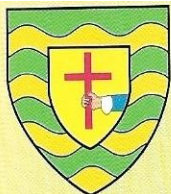
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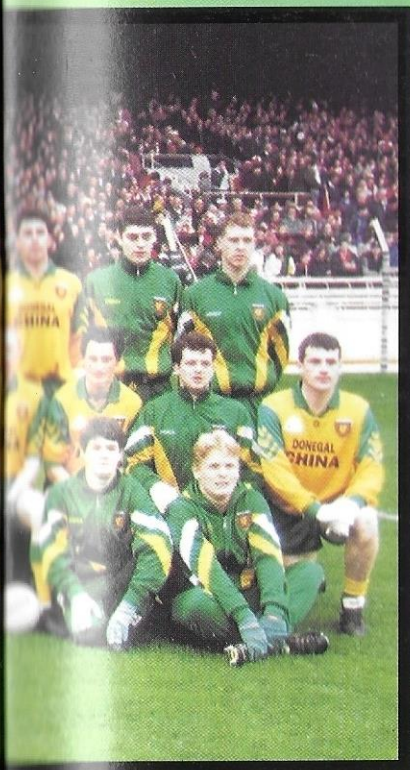
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Dún na nGall



The Donegal team which defeated Cork in the semi-final.

Back row (l-r): Paul Callaghan, Dessie McNamara, Matt Gallagher, Mark Crossan, John Bán Gallagher, Gary Walsh, Brian Murray, James Ruane, Barry McGowan, Eamon McMenamin, Damien Conlon.

Front row (l-r): Padraig Cunningham, Martin Coll, Brian Roper, Manus Boyle, Tony Boyle, Noel Hegarty, John Cunningham, Martin Shovlin, Paddy Hegarty, Gerard Kelly, John Joe Doherty.
Sitting: Niall McCready and Sean McEwan.

Captain Noel Hegarty

Noel won a county senior football medal in 1990 and some weeks later made his debut for the Donegal senior team. Holder of an Ulster Vocational Schools senior medal, he collected his only provincial senior medal in 1992 and was left

full-back in the side that, later that year, brought the Sam Maguire Cup to the county for the only time so far. Noel went in as a substitute in defence in the drawn National League final with Dublin in 1993 and was centre half back in the replay.

He was a forward in the side that lost to Derry in last year's league decider. Noel is younger brother of Paddy, who last autumn was appointed the county coach in Donegal and who is also a member of the senior team.



Player Profiles

Gary Walsh (Burren). 31-years-old. 6'3".
Accountant.

John Cunningham (Na Cealla Beaga). 29-years-old. 5'11".
Restaurant Owner.

Matt Gallagher (Naomh Brid). 34-years-old. 5'10".
Publican and Sales Representative.

John Joe Doherty (Naomh Columba). 28-years-old. 5'10".
Sales Representative.

Barry McGowan (Na Cealla Beaga). 30-years-old. 6'0".
ESB Employee.

Mark Crossan (Naomh Adhamháin). 26-years-old. 5'10".
Sales Representative.

Martin Shovlin (Naomh Ultan). 34-years-old. 5'10".
Telecom Employee.

James Ruane (Bundoran). 21-years-old. 6'2".
Student.

Brian Murray (Kilcock). 32-years-old. 6'3".
Garda.

John Bán Gallagher (Na Cealla Beaga). 29-years-old. 6'1".
Net Maker.

Noel Hegarty (Naomh Columba). 27-years-old. 6'0".
Sales Representative.

Paddy Hegarty (Naomh Columba). 30-years-old. 5'11".
County Coach.

Brian Roper (Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon). 21-years-old. 5'6".
Monumental Sculptor.

Tony Boyle (An Clochán Liath). 26-years-old. 5'11".
Sales Representative.

Manus Boyle (Na Cealla Beaga). 30-years-old. 5'10".
Factory Worker.

Paul Callaghan (Beart). 25-years-old. 6'1".
Sales Representative.

Damien Diver (Ard an Ratha). 21-years-old. 5'10".
Student.

James McHugh (Cill Chartha). 32-years-old. 5'7".
ESB Employee.

Eamon McMenamin (Seán Mac Cumhailis). 22-years-old. 6'11".
Sales Assistant.

Patrick Cunningham (Naomh Columba). 21-years-old. 5'8".
Factory Worker.

Gerard Kelly (Aodh Ruadh, Coill na gCuirín). 24-years-old. 6'1".
Toolmaker.

Dessie McNamara (Bundoran). 20-years-old. 6'0".
Student.

Niall McCready (Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon). 20-years-old. 5'10".
Apprentice Electrician.

Seamus McGinty (Mac Cumhailis). 26-years-old. 5'10".
Mechanic.



*Wishing both teams
the best of luck in today's final.*

Matt Gallagher of Naomh Brid, Ballintra, will play his 138th competitive senior football game for Donegal when he lines out in the 1996 National Football League final against Derry today. 'Competitive' may not be the appropriate adjective because those who know Matt will know that in every game he plays — club, county or province, friendly or serious he is utterly competitive. He equals Martin McHugh's record of 138 games today.

Matt made his senior inter-county debut on 15th November, 1981 in the N.F.L. against Laois in Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon, next door to his Alma Mater, De La Salle, Ballyshannon, with whom he won an All-Ireland Colleges' "B" medal in 1980 (along with Brian Murray). He had just celebrated his nineteenth birthday. Donegal beat Laois 0-10 to 2-3 that day in November 1981. This is his sixteenth consecutive year playing with Donegal.

Matt's 138 games break down as follows:

Senior Football	
Championship:	29
National Football League:	85
Dr. McKenna Cup:	18
Open/Centenary Cups:	6
Total:	138

Matt missed the 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1988-89 League campaigns. He has played against 27 counties (never against Kilkenny, Limerick, Galway, Sligo or London). He has faced Armagh more often than any other county — 14 times. He has played 12 times against Down. Today will be his eleventh time facing Derry. He has played 10 times against Cavan, 8 against Laois, 7 times against Kildare, Dublin and Kerry.

Matt Gallagher Equals Martin McHugh Record

By Seán Ó Gallchoir

Honours

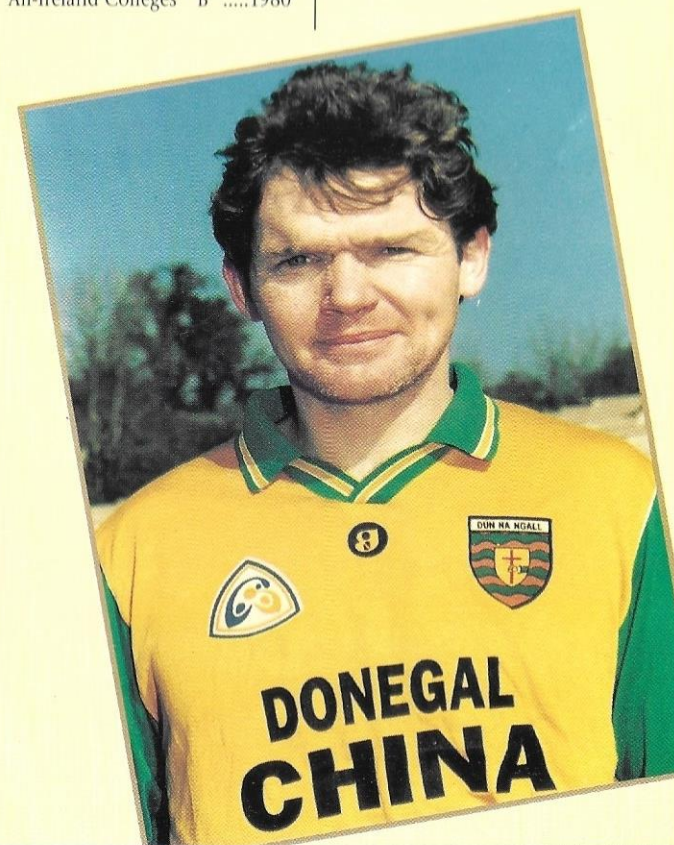
Matt has won most of the game's major honours:

All-Ireland S.F.C.	1992
Ulster S.F.C.	1990, 1992
Dr. McKenna Cup	1985, 1991
Ulster & All-Ireland U-21 F.C.	1982
All-Stars	1992
Railway Cup	1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
Donegal Player of the Year ..	1991
Donegal I.F.C.	1987
Donegal U-12 F.C.	1974
Donegal U-16 F.C.	1978
Donegal U-18 F.C.	1979, 1980
Loch an Iúir Cup	1976
Ulster Herald Cup	1978
McLarnon Cup	1980
All-Ireland Colleges' "B"	1980

Debut

The Donegal team against Laois on November 15th, 1981 was: Noel McCole, Tommy McDermott, Finian Ward, Matt Gallagher, Eunan McIntyre, Michael Carr, Conor Carney, Pat McCrea, Michael Gallagher, Martin McHugh, Brendan Dunleavy, Martin Griffin, Charlie Mulgrew, Paul Carr, Fintan Lynch.

The Donegal Democrat said that: "Newcomers to the defence Matt Gallagher and Tommy McDermott both played soundly after nervous starts with Gallagher particularly impressive in the second half".



Same Again

Derry and Donegal are meeting in the National League final for the second year in a row and the manner in which they both qualified for today's repeat performance bears a remarkable similarity to last season.

Last season Derry opened their campaign with a resounding home defeat by Laois (0-8 to 1-17), followed by a fruitless trip to Ballybofey where they were three points shy of Donegal's total (2-6 to 0-15). Their two other pre-Christmas games saw a revival as Kerry were beaten by two points at Ballinascreen (1-11 to 2-6), and a trip to An Uaimh saw Derry prevail by the minimum margin (0-9 to 0-8) over the Royals.

This season has seen the Foyle men open with a defeat away to Tyrone (0-8 to 1-7), and followed by a hammering (0-7 to 2-15) at home by the Kingdom. However, as with last season the two games before the break saw Derry victorious in both, with Clare (2-13 to 2-8) and

Laois (2-7 to 0-9) being the victims.

It has been Derry's New-Year form that has seen their fortunes transformed in both seasons. Last season Down and Kildare were both beaten (1-10 to 1-7, and 0-10 to 0-9 respectively), before a trip to headquarters saw honours shared with Dublin (1-9 each). This season Kildare (1-6 to 0-7) again, and Meath (1-11 to 1-8) were the victims and today's rivals Donegal were the only team to hold the champions (0-10 each). In both cases four wins, a draw and two defeats resulted from their seven league outings with the scoring records very similar also (5-63 and 6-62), and in each case Derry had conceded more than they had scored (5-71 and 6-64).

And finally, as with last season, Derry scored a narrow quarter-final win over Cavan, but the semi-finals have seen somewhat of a change with Mayo being dispensed with with somewhat less difficulty than Tyrone were last year.

Today's other finalists Donegal have also got in on the act, but they seem to find the earlier stages of the league much more to their liking. The first three rounds last season saw Donegal win over Down (0-8 to 0-7), Derry (0-15 to 2-6) and Dublin (0-12 to 1-8) before losing the Round 4 tie with Kildare (1-8 to 1-11). This year Tyrone (0-16 to 0-7), Clare (3-8 to 0-8) and Laois (1-10 to 0-8) all fell victim to Donegal, before the North-Westerners came a cropper against Kerry (0-6 to 1-11) in their fourth outing.

When matters resumed Donegal sandwiched a win over Meath (0-13 to 0-11) with defeats by Laois (0-8 to 0-10) and Kerry (0-10 to 0-14) in the 94/95 league, but this year no wins were recorded after the break but also no defeats as Donegal drew three-in-a-row with Meath (0-10 to 2-4), Derry (0-10 each) and Kildare (1-8 to 0-11). So this season Donegal have recorded nine points from seven outings compared to last year's eight and also have a much better scoring average (0.97 to 1.22).

As with Derry, the knock-out stages have ended the similarity, as Donegal have reversed last year's form where the quarter-final was the more difficult of the two ties.

However, an overall pattern emerges, which shows that Derry in both years seem to have found the knack of peaking just right and Donegal seem to struggle after the winter break. It will be certainly interesting to see if that pattern holds through for today's final.

Penalty Parade

With one hour left to play, the 1995-96 league has so far yielded a grand total of 22 penalties from which 17 goals have been recorded. This gives an average of 2.31 points per penalty. This is a significantly better conversion rate than last season, when prior to the final, 19 penalties had been awarded, and 12 goals and three points was the return, giving an average of 2.05 points per penalty. For the last two years Round 2 of the league has seen defences on their best behaviour as no penalties were conceded. However, this term, the opposite was the case as Round 2 saw six penalties awarded, the highest for any round. On the other hand, no penalties were awarded in the semi-finals for both this year and last.

Last season, only one player, Donegal's Manus Boyle, took more than one penalty in the league. This season, however, Cavan were awarded no fewer than six penalties in the league stage, with only their Round 5 tie with Down failing to see one awarded. Ronan Carolan stepped up to take all six kicks, and the Breffni man can be rightly hailed as the game's leading penalty-taker as on all six occasions the net was the hall's final resting place. London's Paul Coggins was the only other

player to attempt more than one penalty, and with mixed results, as he recorded a major against Carlow but blazed wide at Tullamore against Offaly.

The full list of penalties and their outcome reads:

Round 1	Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	goal
	v Cork at Breffni Park	
Round 2	Dara Ó Cinnéide (Kerry)	saved
	by Damian McCusker (Derry)	
	Peter Canavan (Tyrone)	saved
	by Paul Callaghan (Donegal)	
	Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	goal
	v Leitrim at Carrick-on-Shannon	
	Colin Kelly (Louth)	goal
	v Westmeath at Athlone	
	Paul Coggins (London)	goal
	v Carlow at Ruislip	
	Brian Burke (Tipperary)	goal
	v Kilkenny at Ardara	
Round 3	Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	goal
	v Westmeath at Breffni Park	
	Paul Coggins (London)	wide
	v Offaly at Tullamore	
Round 4	Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	goal
	v Armagh at Armagh	
Round 5	Damien Walsh (Kilkenny)	wide
	v Waterford at Leamybrien	
Round 6	David Reynolds (Offaly)	goal
	v Carlow at Tullamore	
	Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	goal
	v Dublin at Parnell Park	
	Ger Heavin (Westmeath)	goal
	v Armagh at Castletowngeoghegan	
	Colin McGlynn (Leitrim)	goal
	v Cork at Carrick-on-Shannon	
Round 7	Ronan Carolan (Cavan)	goal
	v Louth at Breffni Park	
	Colin Corkery (Cork)	goal
	v Armagh at Armagh	
	Tony Boyle (Donegal)	goal
	v Kildare at Ballyshannon	
	John McManus (Antrim)	saved
	* by Cathal McGinley (Galway)	
Round 8	Dessie Barry (Longford)	goal
	v London at Longford	
Quarter-Finals	Anthony Finnerty (Mayo)	goal
	v Meath at Roscommon	
	Trevor Giles (Meath)	goal
	v Mayo at Roscommon	

* McManus's original kick was saved but Antrim's Wilson did score from the rebound.



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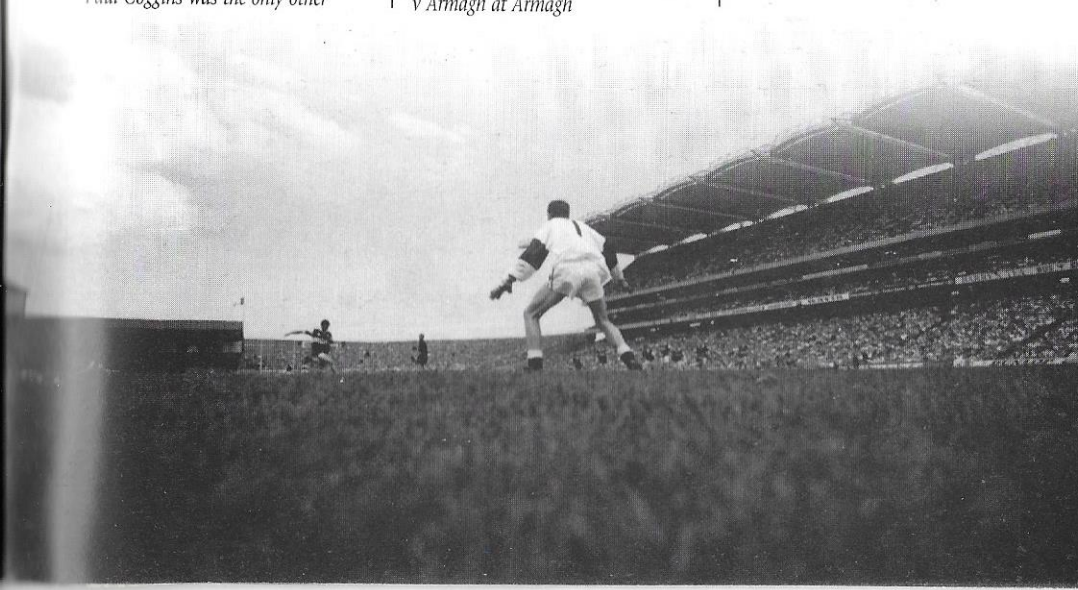
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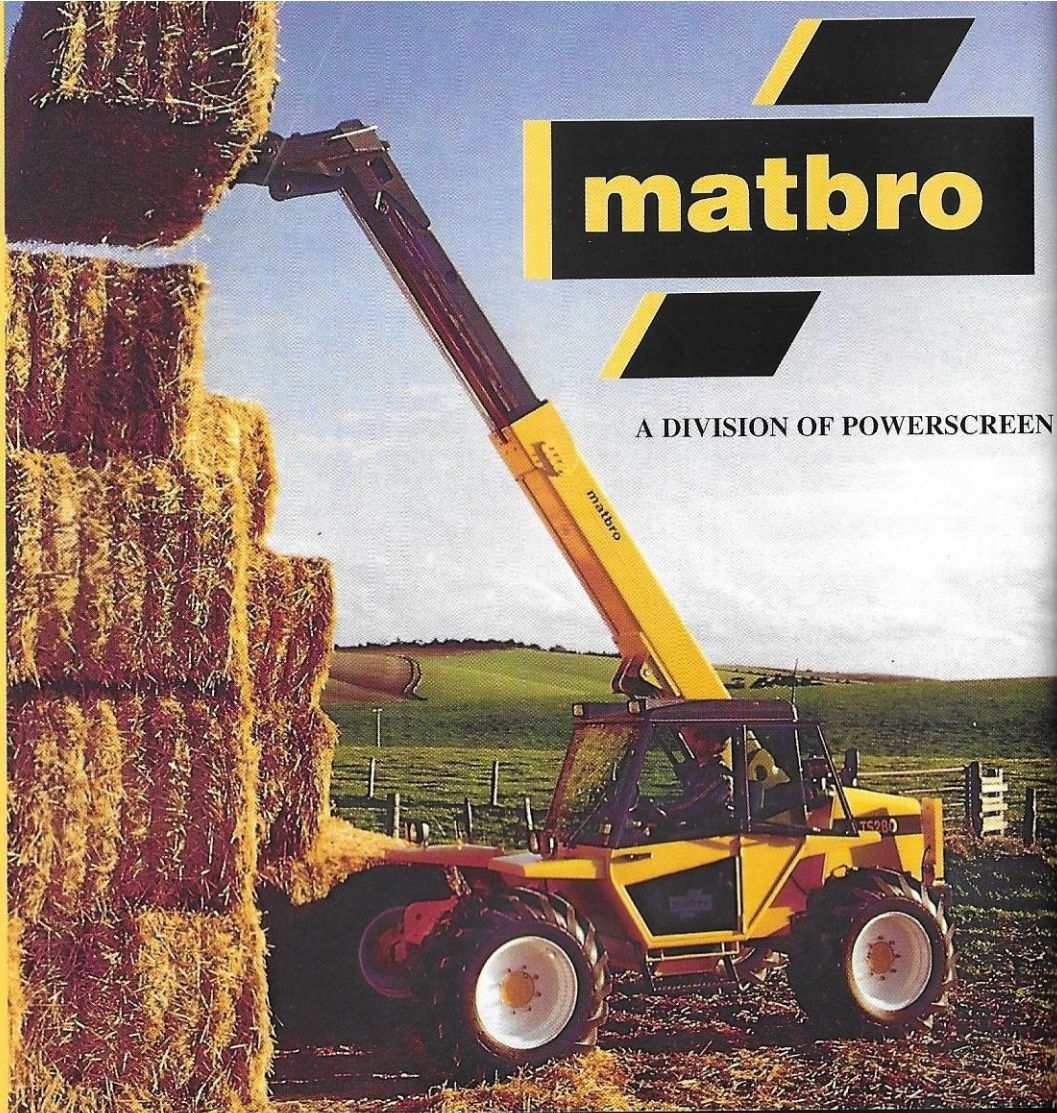
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Previous Meetings

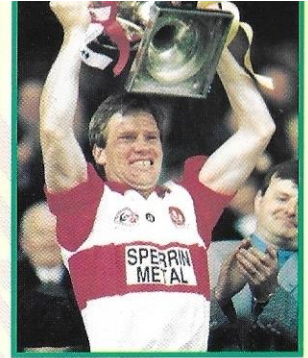
Today will be the 32nd occasion that Derry and Donegal have met in the National League. The series started in 1930 when Donegal prevailed by five points at Derry. A year later Donegal recorded their biggest-ever win in the series when winning by 17 points at Ballybofey. They did not meet again until the 1946-47 season when Derry recorded their first victory with a three-point win at Ballybofey.

Since then they have met on a regular basis with only the decade and a half between the early seventies and mid-eighties seeing no action between these two neighbours. Since the mid-eighties they have met on eight occasions with Donegal holding a slight edge (4 to 3 with one draw) as they do overall, in that they lead the series 16/13 with two games drawn.

The details of these meetings are:

1930-31 Derry: **Donegal 2-6 Derry 1-4**
1931-32 Ballybofey: **Donegal 4-7 Derry 0-2**

1946-47 Ballybofey: **Derry 1-7 Donegal 1-4**
1947-48 Derry: **Donegal 4-6 Derry 3-3**
1948-49 Letterkenny: **Donegal 2-5 Derry 1-4**
1949-50 Derry: **Derry 0-10 Donegal 0-2**
1950-51 Ballybofey: **Donegal 1-7 Derry 1-5**
1951-52 Magherafelt: **Derry 2-6 Donegal 2-4**
1952-53 Ballybofey: **Derry 2-12 Donegal 3-7**
1953-54 Ballinascreen: **Derry 0-6 Donegal 0-5**
1958-59 Dungannon - Play-Off: **Derry 1-11 Donegal 1-4**
1959-60 Ballybofey: **Derry 3-6 Donegal 1-3**
1960-61 Derry: **Donegal 1-6 Derry 0-6**
1962-63 Magherafelt: **Donegal 1-8 Derry 0-6**
1963-64 Ballybofey: **Derry 2-8 Donegal 1-7**
1964-65 Ballinascreen: **Donegal 4-9 Derry 1-10**
Irvinestown — Play-Off: **Donegal 2-9 Derry 1-7**
1965-66 Ballinascreen: **Donegal 3-12 Derry 1-3**
1966-67 Ballybofey: **Donegal 0-9 Derry 0-9**
Ballinascreen — Play-Off: **Derry 5-6 Donegal 0-5**



Tony Scullion proudly holds the NFL Trophy aloft after Derry's victory over Donegal last year.

Irvinestown — Play-Off: **Donegal 0-6 Derry 0-5**
1968-69 Dungannon - Play-Off: **Donegal 2-10 Derry 1-7**
1969-70 Dungannon - Play-Off: **Derry 4-13 Donegal 0-5**
1986-87 Greenlough: **Donegal 1-9 Derry 0-7**
1988-89 Drumurn: **Derry 0-10 Donegal 1-5**
1989-90 Ballybofey: **Donegal 0-11 Derry 0-3**
1992-93 Breefni Park — Q/F: **Donegal 0-10 Derry 2-3**
1993-94 Casement Park: **Derry 3-16 Donegal 0-7**
1994-95 Ballybofey: **Donegal 0-15 Derry 2-6**
Croke Park — Final: **Derry 0-12 Donegal 0-8**
1995-96 Ballybofey: **Donegal 0-10 Derry 0-10**

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An Ulster Problem ...Retaining The Trophy

Apart from the immediate task of trying to beat Donegal, when Derry players step out on Croke Park today they will be striving to achieve what no Ulster county has ever done - retain the National League title - though the record of the past 20-odd years would suggest that retaining 'secondary' honours is a problem of much wider dimensions, as not since 1974, when Kerry completed their second four-in-a-row, has a county had cause to celebrate in successive seasons. However, the record of Mayo, and, of course, Kerry shows that it can be done, but that even the most celebrated combinations from the North have always found it beyond them to stretch ultimate success to a second successive season.

As the first Ulster county to win the league, Derry were early aware of the pitfalls of a retention attempt as Donegal and Antrim shattered their hopes in the 1947-48 campaign.

And so it went on. Down were champions four times but they were all single feats; Monaghan also experienced the bogey in their heyday in the mid-eighties while Derry, in their most recent attempt, fared no better than any of their predecessors which makes their task all the more intimidating - and alluring - today.

Whatever the outcome, barring a draw, history will be made today - a first-ever title for Donegal or a first-ever retention of the title by Derry. At least one Ulster problem will be solved.

Retained

In the 68-year existence of the National League only two counties have succeeded in retaining the title - Kerry and Mayo. The "Kingdom's" first retention was in 1929 when they beat Kildare in the final for the second year running. They held on to their crown in 1931 and 1932 (there was no competition in 1930). Mayo emulated - and bettered - Kerry's achievement in the 1930's when after winning their first title in 1934 they were champions again in 1935, '36, '37, '38 and '39. For the next 30 years the League champions fell with monotonous regularity, but then Kerry showed it could still be done when, to their 1971 success, they added the laurels in '72, '73 and '74.

Obviously it can be done, but just how difficult it is can be gleaned from the records which show that great combinations like Dublin in the fifties and seventies; Down in their various periods of supremacy; Galway in the sixties and more recently Meath and Cork all failed to put league titles back-to-back.

It is of interest to note that since 1926 (the year of the first league final), the championship title has been retained by no fewer than ten counties - Kildare, Kerry, Roscommon, Mayo, Down, Galway, Offaly, Dublin, Meath and Cork - who between them have retained the honours on 22 occasions. On those figures it would appear that the league is a stiffer test than the more prestigious championship, all of which adds up to an intimidating assignment for Derry today.

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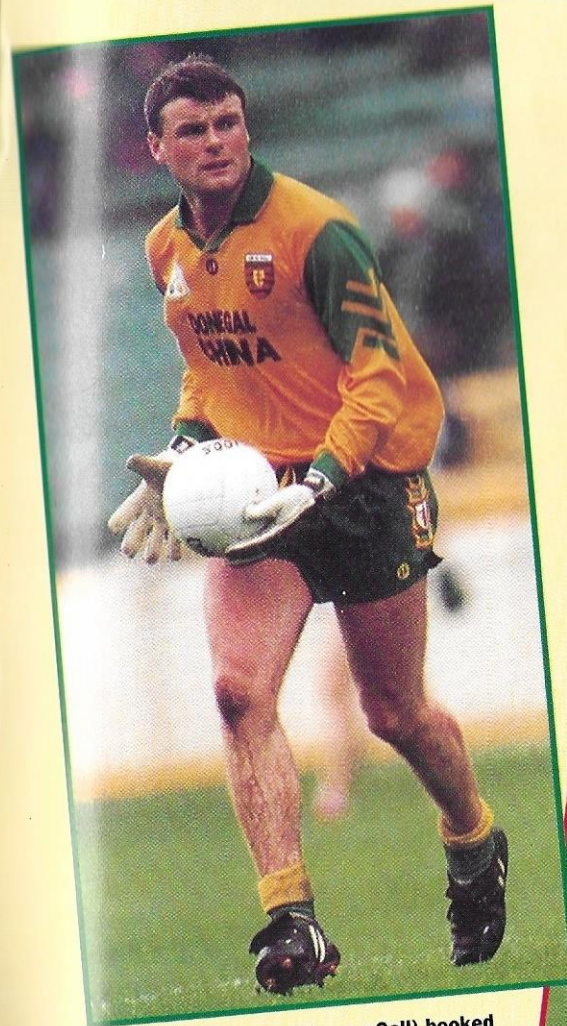
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GOALLESS

As well as striving for their first-ever National League winners' medals, Donegal could well be attempting another objective today, and that is to score a goal against Derry in this competition for the first time since February, 1989. And when it is considered that the sides have met on six occasions since then, Donegal's inability to find the net is most perplexing.

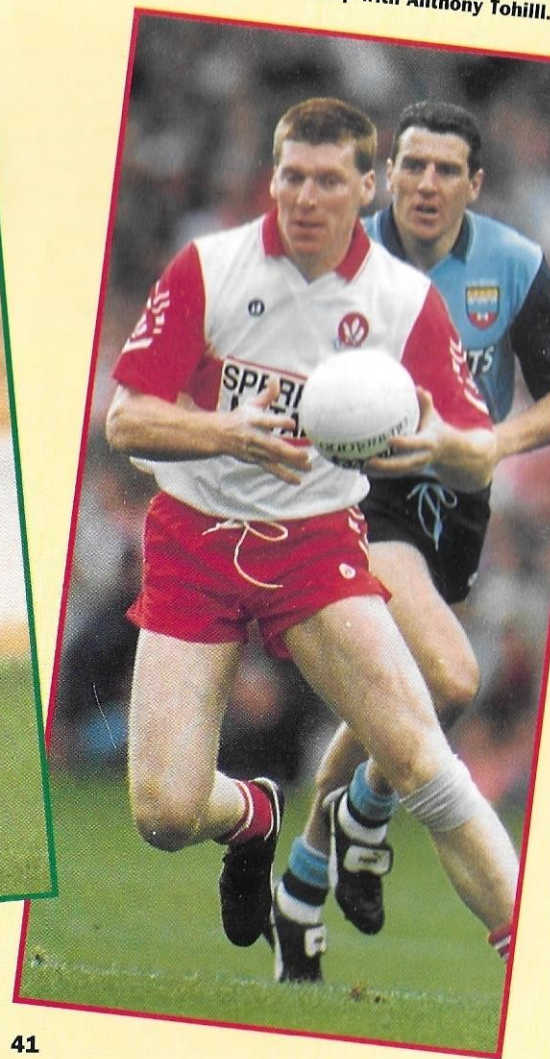
However, it must be noted that of those six games, Donegal emerged victorious in three and drew another, so their lack of majors has not meant a string of defeats for the men in the green and gold. It must also be noted that Derry failed to find the net on three occasions as well, and even when they did score a brace in two of those games, they ended up on the losing side each time.

It seems that concentrating on points is a fruitful exercise up North.



John Bán Gallagher (Dún na nGall) booked Donegal's place in today's final with a magnificent last minute point against Cork.

Brian McGilligan (Doire) forms a formidable midfield partnership with Anthony Tohill.



Ag Feachaint Siar

20 Years Ago

A part from Group A, which included four All-Ireland winners since the beginning of the decade, there was a reasonable mix of strong and not-so-strong counties in the four other groups for the 1975-76 campaign. Dublin who beat Cork, Donegal who beat Louth, Kerry who beat Offaly and Derry who overcame Tyrone were all impressive first-round winners. The first-round shock was the heavy defeat inflicted on holders, Meath who went down to Galway on a 0-6 to 2-11 scoreline at Pearse Stadium.

Donegal dropped the points next time out 0-11 to 0-12 to Laois at Portlaoise but Derry were in fine fettle when they crushed Sligo by 0-16 to 0-2 at Ballymote.

The "replay" of the All-Ireland final saw Dublin reverse the championship verdict (2-11 to 0-13) against Kerry at Croke Park; Cork scored freely at Roscommon, beating the locals by 3-9 to 1-3, while Meath regained some ground in beating Mayo, 2-13 to 2-10 at An Uaimh.

As the pace quickened, Kerry and Cork shared the points (1-9 to 2-6) at Killarney; Dublin hit Kildare with a ten-point win at Athy, while Derry's stock soared when they swamped Meath by

2-12 to 0-2 at Ballinascreen. Dublin went into the mid-Winter break at the top of their division as a result of an easy 5-8 to 1-8 win over Offaly, but at Tuam Stadium Derry came unstuck when going down by five points to Galway (1-8 to 3-7). Donegal, like their neighbours, turned over with six points to their credit following their 2-7 to 1-7 win over Longford at Pearse Park. As the run in to the knock-out stages got under way Derry kept on course with a 1-8 to 1-4 win over Mayo, as did Dublin (although dropping two points to Roscommon), but Donegal's 1-6 to 0-10 defeat by Armagh put them out of contention.

In play-off ties, Derry beat Galway by 2-11 to 2-6 and Cork beat Kerry by 2-7 to 1-5. The quarter-finals saw Galway beat Antrim and Cork beat Armagh, wins that set up two thrilling semi-finals in which Dublin overcame Galway by 1-11 to 0-12 and Derry just pipped Cork by 1-7 to 1-6.

In their first final since 1961, the odds were stacked against Derry; but they were always in contention. They scored more often than their opponents, but Dublin had the ability to snatch major scores from unlikely situations and the Oak Leaf were foiled - but only just - on a 2-10 to 0-15 scoreline.

40 Years Ago

The Northern section of the league (Dr. Lagan Cup) opened the campaign with Donegal winning from Fermanagh (2-8 to 0-6) and Derry losing to Down by 1-6 to 3-6 at Newcastle. Kerry, Longford, Offaly, Louth and Sligo were impressive first-round winners as were Wexford, Galway and Armagh. Donegal's hopes were dented when Monaghan beat them by 3-12 to 0-10 at Castleblaney.

Dublin, the league holders, got off to a winning start with a hard-earned 1-7 to 1-3 verdict over Laois at Portlaoise, while Cork just scraped home (0-11 to 2-4) against Kildare at Droichead Nua. Derry kept their interest alive when beating Armagh by 1-10 to 0-9 at Armagh, but Donegal lost theirs when they failed to Tyrone, (0-7 to 1-5) at Coalisland.

At Croke Park Dublin were pushed by Wicklow but won by 2-2 to 1-2; Cork had two points to spare over Kerry at the Athletic Grounds; Galway beat Offaly by 3-5 to 2-3 at Tullamore, and Derry, in a play-off at Lurgan, got the better of Down, 2-2 to 0-4. But the mid-Winter break was still a round away when the Ulster division was wrapped up with Armagh qualifying for the

semi-final as a result of beating Derry by 1-6 to 0-6 at Coalisland.

When the break did come Dublin were well placed with eight points from four outings with Meath and Cork keeping in step - also with unblemished records. And these three were forcing the pace when activity resumed in February. Meath trounced Antrim (3-12 to 1-8); Cork beat Wexford by 1-11 to 0-5 and Cork had a facile victory (2-13 to 1-6) over Tipperary at Clonmel.

The format did not allow for quarter-finals which left counties like Galway, Mayo and Kerry out of the reckoning so the semi-final line-up was Dublin and Cork, and Meath versus Armagh. Meath got the better of the Ulster representatives, 2-7 to 0-11, but Dublin and Cork finished level at the Athletic Grounds (1-4 to 0-7). Both sides found scoring a trifle easier in the replay at Croke Park - especially Cork who were convincing winners by 1-16 to 1-9.

Defences dominated in the final. In a game that could have gone either way, Cork enjoyed the extra bit of luck rather than superiority in any of the vital areas and that bit of luck saw them claim their second league title on a 0-8 to 0-7 scoreline.

60 Years Ago

No doubt it was the debacles of the previous year's semi-final and final which prompted the G.A.A. authorities to seek another format for the 1935-36 National League. But there was probably some surprise at the radical steps taken to ensure a more competitive format which saw the league reduced to nine counties - the rest being consigned to various small groups, on a mainly provincial basis, who would have no access to league honours. The teams deemed to be the best in the country were - Mayo, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Cavan, Meath, Louth, Laois and Tipperary. Needless to say, counties like Derry, Cork and Donegal were never even considered for inclusion. The system was a straight-forward league with no provision for knock-out stages.

The opening round produced no surprises - Mayo, the holders, beat Kildare by 3-8 to 0-6 at Castlebar; Dublin edged out Louth (2-4 to 1-6) at Dundalk; Galway beat Tipperary by 3-0 to 2-2 at Ballinasloe, while Meath shaded Laois by 0-7 to 1-3 at Portlaoise. The unexpected defeat of Mayo by Dublin put the latter on top of the table after the second series of games where they stayed until after the fourth round when wins over Louth and Laois put the champions at the head of the table from which position they were never

subsequently toppled, though for a time they shared top spot with the All-Ireland champions, Cavan, on eight points.

But not for long. When activity resumed in February Mayo chalked up their fifth win (over Galway) but Cavan faltered in losing to Louth, 0-4 to 0-6 at Dundalk.

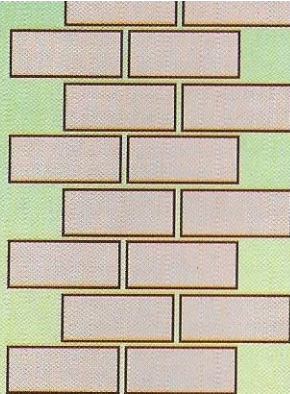
As the pursuit stretched out behind them Mayo collected an easy brace of points (1-14 to 1-0) at the expense of struggling Tipperary and with two rounds still to play only Dublin and Cavan entertained any hope of catching the leaders. The seventh round decided the issue with the crunch tie between Mayo and Cavan at Breffni Park. Amazingly, the battle between the league and All-Ireland champions was a total flop, as Mayo were at their unstoppable best. In a brilliant display they hit five goals and two points to the home team's three points on a day that Dublin's hopes disappeared with their defeat by Kildare.

The final series of games attracted little interest. Mayo, with the title in safe keeping, went to An Uaimh and carelessly lost to the host county, while Tipperary scored their only win of the competition by beating Laois by 6-7 to 1-3. Cavan returned to winning ways with a three-point defeat of Galway at Cavan, and Kildare and Louth shared useless points at Athy.

Not the finale that had been expected.

SCO	HMAN
BOOT	IRE
NTY	LEA
RER	AINS
SIDE	COU
ONAL	LINE
UMP	GUE

Two blocks make up a word – all eight relevant to today's game.
Clue: Three goes with three, four goes with four.



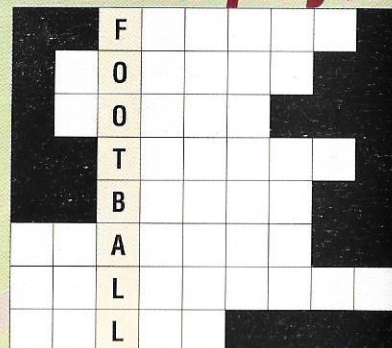
tráth na gceist

- Who captained Derry to win last year's NFL final?
- Only two counties have succeeded in retaining the National Football League title two years in a row. Can you name them?
- Where is O'Moore Park?

freagraí

1. Tony Scullion, 2. Kerry & Mayo, 3. Portlaoise
 CAPTAINS, SIDELINE, NATIONAL, BOOTHMAN,
 LEAGUE, UMPIRE, COUNTY, SCORER
 F ERGAL, D O WNEY, R O PER, T OHILL,
 B RIANN, DI A MOND, GA T LAGHER, WA T SH

find the players



Four players from each of today's senior teams will fit into the above grid in the correct order to spell the word "FOOTBALL" (two of them are first names).

Doire agus Dún na nGall Their One Final Meeting

**1995:
 Derry 0-12; Donegal 0-8.**

A crowd of over 28,000 turned up at Croke Park to see the first-ever final meeting of Donegal and Derry.

Derry opened the scoring after only 10 seconds when Anthony Tohill pointed. However, the Donegal reaction was swift and they swept onto the offensive. For nine minutes Donegal camped in the Derry half, but some woeful shooting saw no change on the scoreboard. Derry punished their neighbours for such wastefulness as Eamonn Burns pointed following a nice move involving Fergal McCusker and Kieran McKeever.

This time the Donegal response was better directed as points from Brian Murray, Manus Boyle and a John Duffy free saw them take the lead. With half-time nearing, Derry stepped up the pace and points from Tohill, Burns and an Enda Gormley free saw the Foylesiders take an interval lead of 0-6 to 0-4.

Donegal appeared after the restart without ace marksman Tony Boyle and an already difficult task was going to be made all the harder for his absence. However, Manus Boyle opened the second-half scoring to reduce Donegal arrears to the minimum but a point from Dermot Heaney and a brace by the irrepressible Tohill saw Derry lead by 0-9 to 0-6 entering the last quarter.

Again Donegal responded, with points from Noel Hegarty and Declan Bonner to get within a point of Derry, and Mark McShane squandered a great chance of the equaliser as he shot wide from a favourable position.

However, this was to be Donegal's last charge as Derry finished the stronger. Further points from Tohill, Burns and Seamus Downey saw Derry pull away to win by four points.

Derry scorers: A.Tohill 0-5, E.Burns 0-3, G.Coleman 0-1, E.Gormley 0-1, D.Heaney 0-1, S.Downey 0-1.

Donegal: M.Boyle 0-3, N.Hegarty 0-2, J.Duffy 0-1, D.Bonner 0-1, B.Murray 0-1.

Derry - Damien McCusker, Kieran McKeever, Tony Scullion, Gary Coleman, John McGurk, Henry Downey, Fergal McCusker, Anthony Tohill, Brian McGilligan, Eamonn Burns, Dermot Heaney, Damien Barton, Joe Brolly, Seamus Downey, Enda Gormley.

Sub - Declan Bateson for Brolly.

Donegal - Gary Walsh, John Joe Doherty, Matt Gallagher, Barry McGowan, Mark Crossan, Martin Gavigan, Martin Shovlin, Mark McShane, Brian Murray, Paddy Hegarty, Noel Hegarty, James McHugh, John Duffy, Tony Boyle, Manus Boyle.

Sub - Declan Bonner for Tony Boyle



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Two-In-A-Row

While Derry will be striving to make it two titles in a row today, Donegal will be anxious to avoid 'a double' of an entirely different nature - that of losing two successive finals. Leaving aside the case of New York, who sustained a number of successive final defeats in the sixties, there have been only four instances of final defeats 'on the double' in the National League.

Kildare were first to experience the 'dismal double' in the National League when they lost the 1928 and 1929 finals to Kerry. Meath met a similar fate when going down to Mayo in 1939 and Galway twelve months later. And the Royal county was again on the receiving end in the finals of 1955 (Dublin) and 1956 (Cork).

The most recent instance of successive final defeats was in 1971 and 1972 when Mayo gave way to Kerry in both finals. Incidentally, that was the last occasion on which the same counties contested the league final in successive seasons. The championship, here again, presents a contrast, as over the league time span there have been eight instances of the same counties meeting two years in a row in the premier competition. Which presents the question: Which is the greater achievement, winning the league or the championship? Statistics would suggest league.

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Minis Make It Ten

by Jerry Grogan P.R.O.



The GAA/INTO Mini-Sevens, which culminates in Croke Park at All-Ireland time, is administered by Cumann na mBunscol, the largest school-based sports body in the country — national teachers promoting our national games in our national schools. Over 7,000 teachers provide a school-based programme of activities for 100,000 children, centred on enjoyment, equality and fair play.

This "scoilspórt" programme includes boys' and girls' football, camogie, indoor and outdoor hurling, rounders, handball, small school blitzes, skill awards, in-service training, summer camps, quizzes and subsidised equipment. The Mini-Sevens is administered in all 32 counties, caters for 20,000 under 12's annually and has been a resounding success since its inception in 1987. This year's tenth birthday celebration will be set in train this afternoon by G.A.A. President Jack Boothman.

Children representing all 32 counties will release balloons in the county colours during a short half-time ceremony.

The opportunity to play in Croke Park during the All-Ireland series is a once-in-a-lifetime dream for most of the 240 children that participate each year. Some former participants, however, have gone on to play at various levels with their own counties. Meath senior footballer Ollie Murphy, Leitrim's Ciarán Mahon, Wexford hurler Rory McCarthy and Galway U-21 hurler Eddie Brady (two goal hero in the 1990 minor hurling final) are but some of the stars that have graced Croke Park over the last ten years.

The women have been well represented also. Monaghan's Jennifer Grennan, Mairéad Kelly and Ann Gavin have made several Croke Park appearances including last year's All-Ireland women's semi-final. More Meath girls Aimeé Bennett, Caitriona Rennicks, Linda

Fitzsimons and Amanda Carr won All-Ireland junior medals in Croke Park in 1994.

While it's great to see Mini-Sevens' children going on to further success at national level, assessment of the full impact of participation in the schools is difficult. It offers enormous benefits in the area of promotion, motivation and orientation of children towards our national games. Just imagine the thrill for a twelve-year-old of marching out behind the Artane Boys' Band and playing before 65,000 spectators!

The collaboration of the INTO and the GAA in this project is unique in the world of sponsorship. It represents the coming together of two organisations which share the altruistic aim of promoting the cultural, educational and physical development of the young people in our community. We look forward to a continuation of this co-operation for many years to come.



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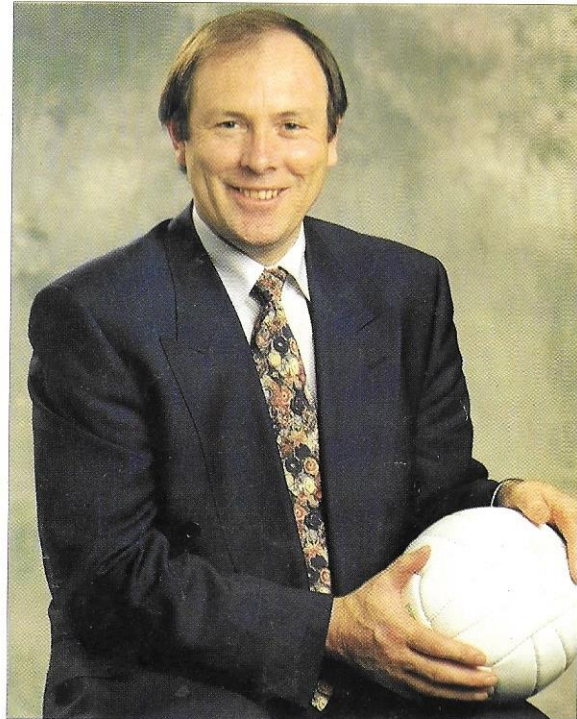
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