

ALLIANZ FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Dún na nGall

v
An Mhí

Dé Domhnach 9ú Marta 2014 - 2.00 i.n.

Parc Sheáin Mhic Cumhail, Bealach Feich



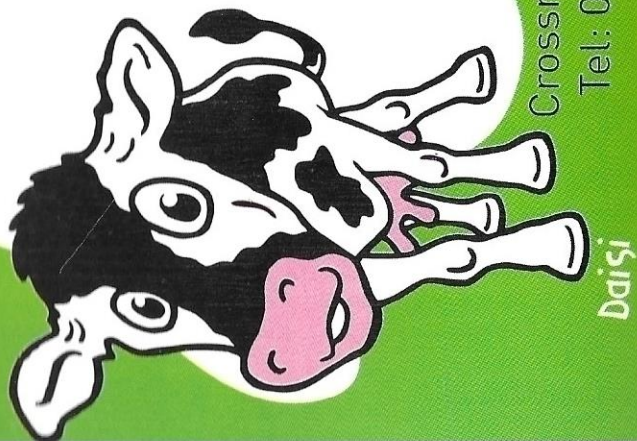
Referee: Pdraig Hughes (Ard Mhacha)
Std By: Noel Mooney (An Cabhán)
Linesman: Paddy Neilan (Ros Comáin)
Sideline: Donal Connolly (Muineachán)



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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Ar son Bord na Condae CLG Dhúin na nGall, ba mhaith liom fáilte a romhaibh go léir anseo inniu go Páirc Sheáin Mhic Cumhaill.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here this afternoon to Mac Cumhaill Park, Ballybofey for our second home game of the 2014 Allianz National Football League. I also extend a warm welcome to the Meath team, management, officials and supporters and I hope you enjoy your short visit to the north-west.

On behalf of Bord na Contae, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Donegal followers that our first team into championship action this year will be the Under 21 footballers on Wednesday week, March 19th. We entertain Fermanagh here in Mac Cumhaill Park in an Ulster quarter-final so please come along and give your support to our lads.

Finally, I hope that you enjoy this afternoon's game and may the best team win.

Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh taitneamh as an chluiche agus go mbeidh turas slán sábháilte ag lucht leanúna an Mhí agus Dhúin na nGall agus iad ag pilleadh na bhaile.

Is mise le meas,
Seán Ó Duinnín,
Cathaoirleach.



Today's singer is
Aimee Mc Daid
as Club Charn Domhnaigh

LEAGUE TABLE



	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Donegal	3	3	0	0	5.46	1.31	27	6
Down	3	2	1	0	7.34	2.28	21	5
Laois	3	2	0	1	4.37	2.38	5	4
Monaghan	3	1	1	1	0.44	3.30	5	3
Armagh	3	1	1	1	3.37	4.33	1	3
Meath	3	1	0	2	5.36	4.50	-11	2
Louth	3	0	1	2	0.36	7.37	-22	1
Galway	3	0	0	3	4.31	5.54	-26	0

DONEGAL'S NEXT THREE FIXTURES

Down v Donegal	Sunday 16th March	Newry
Donegal v Louth	Sunday 30th March	Ballyshannon
Armagh v Donegal	Sunday 6th April	Armagh

Ulster U21 Championship Donegal V Fermanagh Wednesday 19th March Ballybofey

Cover action photos courtesy Michael O'Donnell.



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Ní fhágfar faoin tíoran ná faoin tráill.
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Le gunna scréach faoi lámhach na bpiléar
Seo libh canaigh amhrán na bhfiann.

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03. The consumption of alcohol is not permitted within the ground and spectators are not permitted to bring alcohol into the ground.
04. The unauthorized climbing of any structure, walls or buildings in this ground strictly forbidden.
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06. Under no circumstances is it permitted to throw any object the pitch.
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10. The Ground Management reserves the right to refuse admission to or eject any person who refuses to be searched by a member of the Garda Síochana.
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McCartan won't lie 'Down'

Chris McNulty is the Gaelic Games Correspondent with the Donegal News

DONEGAL'S return with a spring in their step this year has given 'great cause for optimism.

This spring, the buds of young guns like Odhrán MacNiallais, Ryan McHugh and Darach O'Connor are beginning to bloom, but the return of Christy Toye, like an old oak tree in Donegal's wood, gives the forest a fresh green coating.

Martin McElhinney and Dermot Molloy will prove hard to dislodge by the tree-fellers given their current standing.

For all the talk of Donegal's new faces, O'Connor has been the only League debutant, bar the cameo of Stephen McLaughlin in Portlaoise, this year - and we can certainly expect to see more of 'Jigger' in the weeks and month ahead.

MacNiallais and McHugh were on the panel last year, although the former's game time was limited to little more than half-an-hour against Dublin on the final day.

Now, though, the Gaoth Dobhair man has firmly established himself as a fixture in the first XV.

Last Sunday, he hit 1-3 against Monaghan - the first time since Patrick McBrearty against Cavan in June 2011 that a player other than Colm McFadden or Michael Murphy has hit a similar tally.

"I got the ball, looked up, saw the space and - I can't remember what I'd done before that - I was going to take the point," he says of his goal at O'Donnell Park.

Although he has a confident exterior, MacNiallais says stepping into the breach has been 'nerve wrecking'.

"The boys are very good in keeping you calm and giving you good help," he says.

"It's especially nerve wrecking when you consider the experience these boys have. They're great to be around."

The same is true for the likes of McElhinney. At 25, he's far from a rookie, but the St Michael's man has been dogged by injury, missing the entire campaigns of 2009 and 2010 because of a groin injury. Before the arrival of Jim McGuinness, he played just five times for the county.

The presence of club-mate Toye gives him a calm feeling in the dressing room.

"Christy brings so much experience," he says.

"Even off the field, just sitting in the dressing room, Christy is a massive help. Everyone looks up to Christy - he has been about for so long."

McHugh has matured so much and his intelligence on the ball was something Martin Carney remarked



upon when he saw him in a recent game for his college, Sligo IT.

He speaks like a seasoned pro, too.

"We'll not get carried away just yet," he says of Donegal's positive start to the League.

"We're just taking it one game at a time. The three-week break was good for us and training was going well. Jim always says that he will pick the team based on training and everyone

has been making a big push over the last couple of weeks to try and get a jersey."

With Patrick McBrearty, Paddy McGrath, Neil Gallagher and David Walsh - based on last week's team - yet to return to the starting line-up, McGuinness will have a head-scratching exercise in selecting his team before too long, given the performance of those who have taken the chance afforded to them.

"There is no set fifteen anymore," the manager points out. You have six subs now as well if you have the numbers to use them.

"We are a team who are benefitting from having a lot of our older players - who are central to the fold - being added and young boys are coming in and pushing."

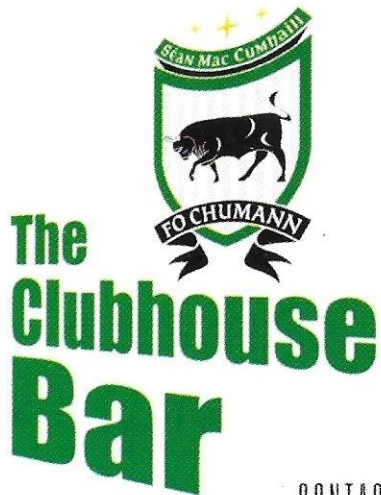
McGuinness will manage the youngsters carefully. Between his introduction to the panel in 2011 as a 17-year old to the Ulster final in 2012, Patrick McBrearty trained just 25 times with the Donegal team. O'Connor is sitting his Leaving Cert this year at Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana.

McGuinness has never performed major surgery on his team, although there have been significant movers. The return of Michael Hegarty was a huge fillip in 2011, as was McBrearty's emergence for the Championship. In 2012, Martin O'Reilly received the call, having played an Ulster Under-21 Hurling Shield final against Tyrone in a curtain raiser to the 2011 Ulster SFC final.

"Jim rang me up and I couldn't really believe it," he said. "I just wanted to get playing with the under 21s that year. I was only out of the minors, so I thought that was the realistic thing. Next thing I know is I'm on the bus with the senior team. Even getting the word that I was being called in to train with the team. That was just an amazing call to get."

With young and old blending nicely in early March, McGuinness might well have trouble seeing the wood from the trees when the business end of the season rolls up - but he'll not complain if that's the case.

He says: "Those are good problems to have down the line. The new faces have given us a fresh impetus and that's good for the older players as well."



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View with the Royal County

By Sean Wall

JIMMY'S winning matches again - and that's bad news for Mick O'Dowd and his Meath squad as they go in search of badly-needed NFL Division 2 points at Sean MacCumhaill Park here this afternoon.

Promotion to Division 1 and top tier football in 2015 was Meath's ambition at the commencement of the campaign. However successive defeats, first at the hands of Monaghan and more recently Armagh, have all but put paid to that prospect and instead the Royals are now seeking to consolidate their position in Division 2.

Following a relatively successful O'Byrne Cup campaign - they lost to Kildare in the final - hopes were high that this mostly young and inexperienced Meath outfit would compete successfully in this division after spending just one season in Division 3.

So far it hasn't quite worked out that way even though they made a winning start when overcoming Galway by four points in a high scoring encounter at Pairc Tailteann.

However the concession of 4-11 in that game should have been a cause of worry for the Meath management team. Indeed it could have been worse had keeper Paddy O'Rourke not saved a first half penalty.

The trip to Clones to take on Ulster champions Monaghan was always going to be a tricky assignment, but no one, least of all Meath supporters, expected such a pasting from the Farney men. The visitors offered little more than token resistance that day and it was the performance as much as the 12 point defeat that proved equally alarming.

Armagh might have expected a backlash when they visited Navan a little over a week ago but it didn't work out that way as Meath produced another disappointing display in front of their own supporters and conceded 19 scores as they went down by three points.

For Meath their biggest problem is that the rate of progression hasn't been as fast as was expected. It takes time for new players to adjust to the rigours of intercounty football, its a gradual progression and doesn't happen overnight.

They have an abundance of young talent in their ranks and manager O'Dowd has a vision of

where he wants to take this present squad of players.

O'Dowd is a firm believer that for a county to be competing regularly in the All-Ireland series it has to be playing division one football.

He has already taken some bold decisions in his quest to dine at the top table, dispensing with the services of the likes of Joe Sheridan, Cian Ward, Brian Farrell and Peadar Byrne, a quartet with an abundance of experience of intercounty football.

His plans though have been disrupted by injuries to key players, though O'Dowd will not be putting that forward as an excuse for his sides poor start to the league.

Last year's midfield partnership of Conor Gillespie and Brian Meade could miss the entire campaign while defender Davy Dalton is also a long term injury casualty. Exciting newcomer Cillian O'Sullivan missed the Armagh game and is also on the injured list as is Andrew Tormey who limped out of the action against the Orchard County.

Relative newcomers Michael Newman who was an All-Star nominee, and national sprint champion Eamon Wallace have yet to rediscover the explosive form which made them such exciting prospects in 2013. Tenacious defender Donal Keogan as also to find his best form after been out injured early in the year.

Meath supporters like those from a lot of counties are passionate about their football and yearn for a return to the glory years when winning national and provincial titles was the norm.

Those glory days are well in the past and the task now for O'Dowd and his players is to create a new era of success. Getting Meath football back competing against the elite will take time and will be no quick-fix. The best Meath can hope for at present is consolidation in Division 2 of the league. Expecting them to come from Division 3 and march through Division 2 is a bit far fetched.

Today's clash with Donegal is only the 11th time the counties have met in the league and so far Donegal have won four of those encounters with Meath winning three. The remaining three games ended in draws. The Meath men would gladly settle for a share of the spoils today.



Kevin Gallagher BSc

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ELEVENTH ENCOUNTER

Fr. Seán

The first League meeting of Dún na nGall and An Mhí was forty years ago – on February 17, 1974 in Ballyshannon. It was in Division 2A of the League, with the winners almost assured of promotion to Division 1B. It was a game Dún na nGall should have won but lost by a point 0-8/0-7. Dún na nGall's tale of woe included a disallowed Martin Carney goal, a Séamus Bonner screamer hitting the post, Paul McGettigan and Mickey Lafferty going close and, above all, Neilly Gallagher and Martin Carney missing close-in free kicks near the end.

Dún na nGall:

Donal Monaghan	Alan Kane:	
Brian McEniff (0-1)	Pádraig McShea	Andy Curran:
	Anthony Gallagher	Finian Ward:
	Michael Lafferty (0-1) and Paul McGettigan:	
Martin Carney	Séamus Bonner (0-2)	Joe Winston (0-1):
Hughie McClafferty	Neilly Gallagher (0-2)	Séamie Granaghan.

Subs: Kieran Keeney and Paddy McDyer.

Pauroic McShea had a great game for Dún na nGall: Lafferty and McGettigan were on top at midfield: Carney was the best of the forward line. Colm McFadden (Colm Anthony's father) was an unused substitute.

An Mhí:

	F. Carbury:	
M. Collins	J. Quinn	P. Murray:
M. Mahon	K. McConnell	P. Reynolds:
	K. Rennicks (0-1) and P. O'Brien:	
P. Cromwell	M. Kerrigan (0-1)	D. Murtagh (0-3):
P. Farrelly (0-1)	G. Farrelly (0-1)	M. Fay (0-1).

Subs: K. Mooney, P. McManus.

Dún na nGall and An Mhí have met in the League on nine occasions since:

2	6 Nov 1988:	Dún na nGall	0-15	An Mhí	1-6	Bealach Féich
3	1 Apr 1990:	An Mhí	2-12	Dún na nGall	0-13	Cluain Eois
4	2 Dec 1990:	An Mhí	1-11	Dún na nGall	0-10	An Uaimh
5	5 Mar 1995:	Dún na nGall	0-13	An Mhí	0-11	An Uaimh
6	4 Feb 1996:	Dún na nGall	0-10	An Mhí	2-4	An Uaimh
7	2 Feb 1997:	An Mhí	0-13	Dún na nGall	0-8	Bealach Féich
8	30 Nov 1997:	An Mhí	1-8	Dún na nGall	1-8	Béal Átha Seanaidh
9	27 Mar 2010:	Dún na nGall	1-12	An Mhí	0-10	Bealach Féich
10	13 Mar 2011:	Dún na nGall	0-15	An Mhí	0-9	An Uaimh

Dún na nGall won 4 An Mhí won 4 Drawn 2

Martin McHugh scored 0-9 in both the 1988 and April 1990 matches.

Damien Diver played in the 1995, 1996, and Nov. 1997 matches.

Jim McGuinness was at midfield for Dún na nGall in the Nov. 1997 match.

John Duffy scored 1-1 in that same Nov. 1997 match. Duffy also played in the 1995 and 1996 matches.

Paul Durcan, Neil McGee, Karl Lacey, Anthony Thompson, Neil Gallagher, Frank McGlynn, Colm A. McFadden, Michael Murphy and David Walsh all appeared in both the 2010 and 2011 matches.

Michael Murphy scored 1-6 in the 2010 match and 0-6 in the 2011 match.

Patrick McBrearty, Ryan McHugh and Martin O'Reilly played on the Donegal Vocational Schools' team that beat Meath 2-6/0-6 in the 2011 All-Ireland semi-final.

Paul Durcan has played in all Dún na nGall's League games since 19 February 2011:

2011.....7 2012.....7 2013.....7 2014....3 = 24

Dún na nGall



1
Pól Ó Durcáin
Paul Durkan
Na Ceithre Máistirí



2
Éamonn Mac Aoidh
Eamon McGee
Gaoth Dobhair



3
Neil Mac Aoidh
Neil Mc Gee
Gaoth Dobhair



4
Ryan McAodha
Ryan McHugh
Cill Chartha



5
Proinsias MFhloinn
Frank McGlynn
Gleann Fhinne



6
Leo Mac Giolla Eoin
Leo Mac Loone
Naomh Conail



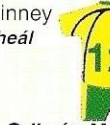
7
Antoin Mc Thomáis
Anthony Thompson
Naomh Conail



8
Ruairí Caomhánach
Rory Kavanagh
Naomh Adhamháin



11
Cristóir Ó Tuathaigh
Christy Toye
Naomh Mícheál



12
Odhrán Mac Niallais
Odhran McNelis
Naomh Mícheál



10
Marc Mac Aodha
Mark McHugh
Cill Chartha



14
Mícheál Ó Murchú
Michael Murphy
Gleann Súilí



15
Diarmuid Ó Ludhóg
Dermot Molloy
Naomh Conail

- Fir Ionaid
- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 16 Mícheál Ó Baoill | Michael Boyle | <i>An Tearmann</i> | 22 Leon Mac Thomáis | Leon Thompson | <i>Seán Mac Cumhaill</i> |
| 17 Darach Ó Conchúir | Darach O'Connor | <i>Bun Crannacha</i> | 23 Lúcas Ó Cianaigh | Luke Keane | <i>Na Ceithre Máistir</i> |
| 18 Déaglán Breathnach | Declan Walsh | <i>Málainn</i> | 24 Daibheid Breathnach | David Walsh | <i>Naomh Brid</i> |
| 19 Carl de Lása | Karl Lacey | <i>Na Ceithre Máistir</i> | 25 Stiofán Ó Griofa | Neil Gallagher | <i>Gleann Súilí</i> |
| 20 Gary McPháidín | Gary McFadden | <i>Gleann Súilí</i> | 26 Pádraig Mac Breartaigh | Patrick McBrearty | <i>Cill Chartha</i> |
| 21 Aodh McPháidín | Hugh McFadden | <i>Na Cealla Beaga</i> | | | |

Bainisteoir: Jim McGuinness
Maor Foirme: Seán Ó Dubhthaigh
Roghnóirí Eile: Pól MacGonagail, Damien Ó Duibhir, Pádraig Ó Seibhlinn

	Cúil	Cúillíní	Seachaí	45	Saor	Ciceanna
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Iomlán	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



OFFICIALS

Referee:
Pádraig Hughes (Ard Mhacha)

Sto/By:
Noel Mooney (An Cabhán)

Linesman:
Paddy Neilan (Ros Comáin)

Sideline:
Donal Connolly (Muineachán)

An Mhí



1
Pádraig Ó Ruairc
Patrick O'Rourke
Skryne



4
Mícheál de Burca
Mickey Burke
Longwood



3
Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh
Kevin Reilly (C)
Navan O'Mahony's



7
Eoghan hArrachtáin
Eoghan Harrington
Wolfe Tones



6
Briain Ó Mantáin
Bryan Menton
Donaghmore/Ashbourne



2
Donal Ó hÉochogáin
Donal Keogan
Rathkenny



5
Pádraic Ó hEarnáin
Pádraic Harnan
Moynalvey



8
Aindriú Ó Tormoigh
Andrew Tormey
Donaghmore/Ashbourne



9
Shane Ó Ruairc
Shane O'Rourke
Simonstown Gaels



11
Damien Ó Cearúill
Damien Carroll
Ballinabrackey



12
Brian Mac Mathuna
Brian Mc Mahon
Ratoath



10
Donncha Ó Toibín
Donncha Tobin
Blackhall Gaels



14
Stiofán Ó Bré
Stephen Bray
Navan O'Mahony's



13
Eamon de Bhailis
Eamon Wallace
Ratoath



15
Mícheál Nuaman
Michael Newman
Kilmainham

- Fir Ionaid
- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 16. Conchúr Mac Aodha | Conor McHugh | Oldcastle | 21. Pádraig Mac Giolla Seanáin | Paddy Gilsean | Oldcastle |
| 17. Daithí Ó Bré | David Bray | Navan O'Mahony's | 22. Daithí Ó Lorcain | David Larkin | Summerhill |
| 18. Graham Ó Raghallaigh | Graham Reilly | St. Colmcille's | 23. Marcas Ó Suilleabháin | Mark O'Sullivan | Moynalvey |
| 19. Seamus Ó Cionait | Seamus Kenny | Simonstown Gaels | 24. Sean Ó Corráin | Sean Curran | Donaghmore Ashbourne |
| 20. Dalton Mac Donncha | Dalton Mc Donagh | Na Fianna | | | |

Bainisteoir: Michael Ó Dúda
Cathaoirleach: Conor Ó Tormoigh
Roghnóirí Eile: Sean Ó Ceallaigh
Maor Foirme: Treabhair Ó Glaisne

	Cúil	Cúillíní	Seachaí	45	Saor	Ciceanna
1 Adh Leath	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Iomlán	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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DONEGAL'S LEADING INDEPENDENT BOOKMAKER



Donegal and Meath on different missions

BY TOM COMACK (Donegal Democrat/Peoples Press)

Donegal manager Jim McGuinness would be forgiven for thinking in recent weeks of Mark Twain's famous quote: 'Reports of our death have been greatly exaggerated'.

After three comfortable victories over Laois, Galway and Monaghan, Donegal have got the new season off to a flying start. The 2012 All-Ireland champions are proudly sitting on top of the Division Two table.

The evidence so far is that Donegal are definitely back and their graph is on the up again after last season's post All-Ireland disappointment.

Many of the old hands look reinvigorated while new kid on the block Odhran MacNiallais has grabbed the opportunity with both hands. Christy Toye has made an encouraging return from a lengthy lay-off while Martin McElhinney has finally begun to realise his true potential and has had three fine games in the locker. These include a man of the match performance against the Tribesmen.

Ryan McHugh has slotted into the defence and even at this early stage of the year has already laid down a marker for championship inclusion.

McGuinness's charges opened with a 16 point victory over Laois, in their own backyard of O'Moore Park, in Portlaoise. Odhran MacNiallais and Colm McFadden scored the goals and Michael Murphy kicked six points as the 2012 All-Ireland champions ripped the O'Moore County apart in what was an overall energetic performance.

And they followed that up seven days later with another refreshing performance and a seven points victory over Galway, in Pearse Stadium. McFadden again found the net and also posted four points while Murphy chipped in with four points and Dermot 'Brick' Molloy,

two, as the front three scored 1-10 of the total of 1-16.

On Sunday last against Monaghan, in O'Donnell Park, MacNiallais and McFadden once again raised the green flags as Donegal avenged last July's Ulster final defeat with an emphatic 2-11 to 0-10 victory over the Farnley County.

Meath arrive here in MacCumhaill Park today with just two points from their three games to date in the campaign.

And for Mick O'Dowd, the Meath manager, following an opening day 3-18 to 4-11 victory over Galway, in Navan, it is very much a case of where has it all gone wrong.

The Royals have since suffered defeats to Monaghan away and Armagh at home. Both disappointing results in different ways.

"It is so competitive that you have to make sure you stay in the division you are in, but you have to broaden your panel depth so you are right for the championship, that is how you build faith in players, by giving them the experience they gain in tough games like that," O'Dowd said after last Saturday night's defeat to Armagh, in Navan.

"If you come through it and pick up enough points in the next four games then the experience gained in these type of games will be invaluable" he added, in a clear sign that Meath's sights are already firmly fixed on next summer.

Survival in Division Two appears to be the aim for the league. And with Louth and Galway taking water and below them in the table and with Laois away and Down and Louth still to come, both at home after today, the couple of more points required for league sanctuary might not be out of the question.

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Donegal and Meath met in 1988

By Peter Campbell (Sports Editor, Donegal Democrat, Donegal People's Press)

When Meath came to Ballybofey as All-Ireland champions in November 1988, it was the first meeting of Donegal and Meath in Division One of the League, they were sent packing by one of Donegal's best ever displays, one that made manager Tom Conaghan very happy.

The Donegal Democrat report was as follows:

Donegal	0-15
Meath	1-6

In what must surely rank as one of the most impressive results ever to come out of MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey, in recent times, Donegal outplayed, outclassed and outwitted National League and All-Ireland champions, Meath, in a thoroughly absorbing and dramatic encounter last Sunday.

True, it may not have been a full Meath side, but this should not take away from the home team's achievement as on the day it would have been difficult for any fifteen to match the Donegal lads for sheer guts and determination.

Have they made the all important breakthrough in terms of having the confidence and the will to win? Only time will tell but surely supporters and critics can take heart from this excellent result.

It was also an unusual Donegal performance in many respects. The forwards looked much more comfortable playing together as they attempted a more direct approach. They weren't afraid to take chances from far out while at the same time making space available for their colleagues if they wished to push an attack even further into the opponent's goalmouth.

Midfielders Anthony Molloy and Martin Gavigan showed that given the time and encouragement they can adapt and be consistent. They changed style somewhat to counter the Hayes-Beggy threat with Molloy thinking two steps ahead of Hayes most of the

time while Gavigan was sure and intelligent with his deliveries.

In defence there was just no way Meath were going to get any joy. Replacement full-back John Connors held the mighty Brian Stafford at bay while Cathal Campbell and John Joe Doherty broke down attack after attack. They switched many such opportunities into the forwards with the help of Donal Reid and Martin Shovlin on either wing and the tenacious Brian Tuohy in the centre.

In fact the combination play of the side showed on the day was the best and most effective for years. They discovered how easy it was to trouble opposing defences by getting rid of the ball early and let it do the work.

As usual Gary Walsh was his ever dependable self stopping two certain goals in between a multitude of good clearances.

POINT TO PROVE

Donegal had a point to prove entering this match. Questions had been raised about their ability to stick the pace in Division One but if last Sunday's performance is any guideline those fears must now be gone.

Meath, for the most part, looked unlikely to cause too many problems. Their attack lacked penetration and apart from Beggy, showed little imagination. Brian Stafford got the show on the road after 48 seconds with a point following dangerous play from Campbell in defence. This, however, was to be his last until twelve minutes from the interval, when he sent over his second and last. Clearly his inability to find a way around Connors stunted his performance.

A Brian Murray ball to Seamus Carr forced a '50' which Martin McHugh converted after three and a half minutes. Molloy and McHugh combined to send Pat Ward through to point from 40 yards a minute later. This was one of the best struck scores on the day and must give the Glenties lad confidence for the future. Ryan and Shovlin combined to force a line

Cont. on page 17



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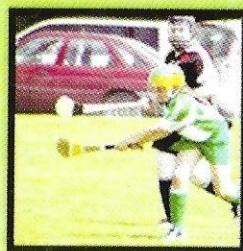
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Donegal and Meath met in 1988 ball for McHugh nearing six minutes. The latter struck a beautiful shot over the Meath bar.

McHugh struck again in the eighth minute after Marty Carlin's shot at goal came off the woodwork. Had he realised the time and space available to him he could have rattled the net with this one.

Gerry Martyn, Stafford and John Henry had points in Meath's best spell in the game. Midfielder Sean Kelly had collided with Martin Gavigan and was forced to leave the field injured. He was replaced by Finian Murtagh, who moved into attack with Beggy coming to midfield.

McHugh hit the post and Carlin appeared to be impeded while going for another stab at goal but the Royal County survived. Indeed had Gary Walsh not moved out fast to intercept David Beggy the game would certainly have taken a turn in another direction. His quick thinking saved the day. Further points from Carlin and two from McHugh gave the home team three points to spare with five minutes left in the half.

Repeated attacks were cancelled out by O'Malley and O'Connell who was in excellent form before a long Hayes shot dropped to the intruding Beggy and he made no mistake by ramming it to the roof of the net. This brought the sides level at half-time despite the fact Donegal had for the most part the greater control of the game.

UP FOR GRABS

The game was up for grabs in the second half but while Donegal got stronger, Meath struggled to keep in the race. The killer blow came in the opening twelve minutes when Carlin and Brian Murray swamped the Meath half of the field and added four points. Murray's three proved he was

a player capable of great things. His only problem now is repeating the act.

Meath could only offer two points from sub Finian Murtagh in this half while four McHugh points, two from play and two from frees, crowned off his most impressive intercounty performance since the championship win against Down in Ballybofey three years ago. In fact the nine point tally was his highest ever in intercounty competition.

David Beggy came close while Gary Walsh again came to the rescue in front of goal when Mattie McCabe broke through. His save kept them well ahead and out of the danger zone.

Make no mistake about it, Donegal had to raise their game to climb above their opponents. Meath were capable of winning at any stage but simply lacked the finishing touch. An important victory, yes indeed, but still far from a position of comfort.

Donegal must keep their feet firmly on the ground from now on. Beating Meath was important, beating the rest will be even more important.

Donegal: Gary Walsh; John Joe Doherty, John Connors, Cathal Campbell; Donal Reid, Brian Tuohy, Martin Shovlin; Anthony Molloy, Martin Gavigan; Pat Ward (0-1), Brian Murray (0-3), Tommy Ryan; Martin McHugh (0-9), Marty Carlin (0-2), Seamus Carr.

Meath: Michael McQuillan; Martin O'Connell, Robbie O'Malley, Terry Ferguson; Colm Coyle, Liam Harnan, Brendan O'Reilly; Liam Hayes, Sean Kelly; David Beggy (1-0), Mattie McCabe, John Henry (0-1); Gerry Martyn (0-1), Brian Stafford (0-2), Liam Smith. Subs., Finian Murtagh (0-2) for Sean Kelly (inj); Frank Foley for Liam Harnan; Padraig Coyle for Liam Smith.

Referee: Seamus Prior (Leitrim)

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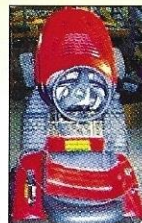
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Murphy's lasp-gasp equaliser earns Donegal a point

DONEGAL 1-12
MEATH 1-12

REPORT BY CHRIS MCNULTY
AT SEAN MACCUMHAILL PARK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With the introduction of Neil Gallagher came a more settled Donegal

MATCH STATS

DONEGAL v MEATH

1	Goals	1
12	Points	12
8	Wides	9
1	45s	0
25	Frees awarded	27
7	Frees scored	4
5	Short efforts	2
1	Black cards	0
2	Yellow cards	1
0	Red cards	0

ATTENDANCE 7,000

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

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

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

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

When Donncha Tobin teed up Sean

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

over.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Black-carded: Donegal - Ryan McHugh (48 mins); Meath - none.
Booked: Donegal - Martin McElhinney (9 mins), Mark McHugh (54 mins); Meath - Kevin Reilly (45 mins).

REFEREE: Pdraig Hughes (Armagh).