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National Leagues

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NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Quarter Final

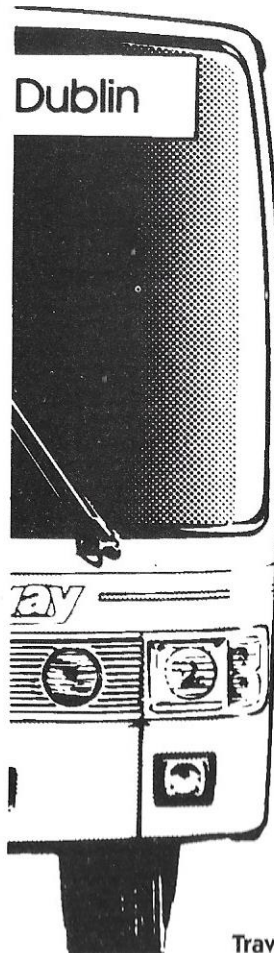


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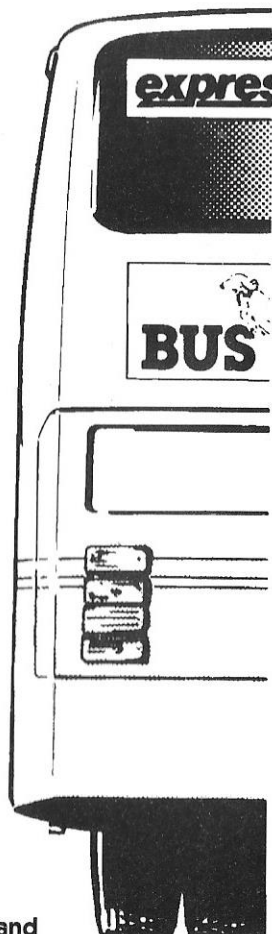
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na bpiléar,

Seo libh canaig amhrán na bhFiann.

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael



Church & General
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Quarter Final

3.30 An Clár v Dún na nGall

Réiteoir: B. White (Loch Garman)



Extra time must be played in the event of a draw at full time.

DBA

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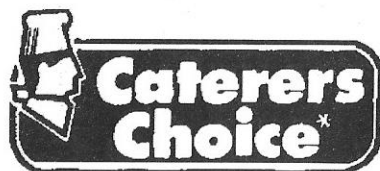
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Na Conallaigh Chun Na Dail gCais A Chloí?

Nuair a tháinig An Clár amach mar churaiddh na Mumhan, beagnach trí bliana ó shoin, bhí lucht leanta na peile Gaelaí. Ba thrua nár lean an dea-thoradh ar feadh cúpla bliain ina dhiaidh sin ach ní mór a thabhairt dhun chuimhne gurbiad tánaistí i gcaobhchluichí '93 agus '94 (Corcaigh) a sháraigh iad ó dheas.

I mbliana táid tar éis éacht a dhéanamh sa pheil agus san iomáint agus isé An Clár an t-aon chontae a fhéadfadh an 'dúbhailt' a bhaint amach. Tá na peileadóirí le cruthú dúinn nach fás aon oíche a bhí iontu i '92 agus is cuma cén céile comhraic a chasann leo tá siad in ann agus in inmhe a ndúshlán a thabhairt.

Maidir leis na Conallaigh bhíodar, le cúpla bliain, ag séideadh te agus ag séideadh fuar ach le cúpla mí anuas táid ag glacadh go dáiríre leis na cluichí Léige. Le deireannas tá siad i mbarr foirfeachta agus sa chluiche in

aghaidh Chill Dara, ach go háirithe, chruthaigh siad go bhfuil teacht aniar iontu.

Cad faoin gcluiche inniu? Nuair a bhuail an dá fhoireann in aghaidh a chéile — táid araon i Roinn I — bhí an lá leis na Dail gCais. Caithfear a thógaint san áireamh go raibh easláinte, nó goineadh, ar roinnt d'fhoireann Dhún na nGall an lá sin. Ach os rud é go raibh cluiche breise ag na Conallaigh in aghaidh Chill Dara agus go bhfuil an fhoireann ar fad ar fáil anois tá an

cuma ar an scéal go mbeidh an ceann is fearr ag Dún na nGall i bPáirc Mhic Éil inniu. Ach níl cheart beag-is-fiú a dhéanamh de na Cláraigh; tá scoth pheileadóirí acu agus tá a stair sa tsraith láithreach inmholta. Tá Seán Ó Caoimh, iarpheileadóir Ciarraíoch, le seacht mbonn Uile-Éireann, ina bhainisteoir thar an gcoiteann. Beidh an fhoireann ar bís le bheith ar ais ar an stáitse náisiúnta agus cé a chuirfeadh geall nach inniu a tharlóidh sé? Feicimid.

An Réitoir: Brian White (Loch Garman)

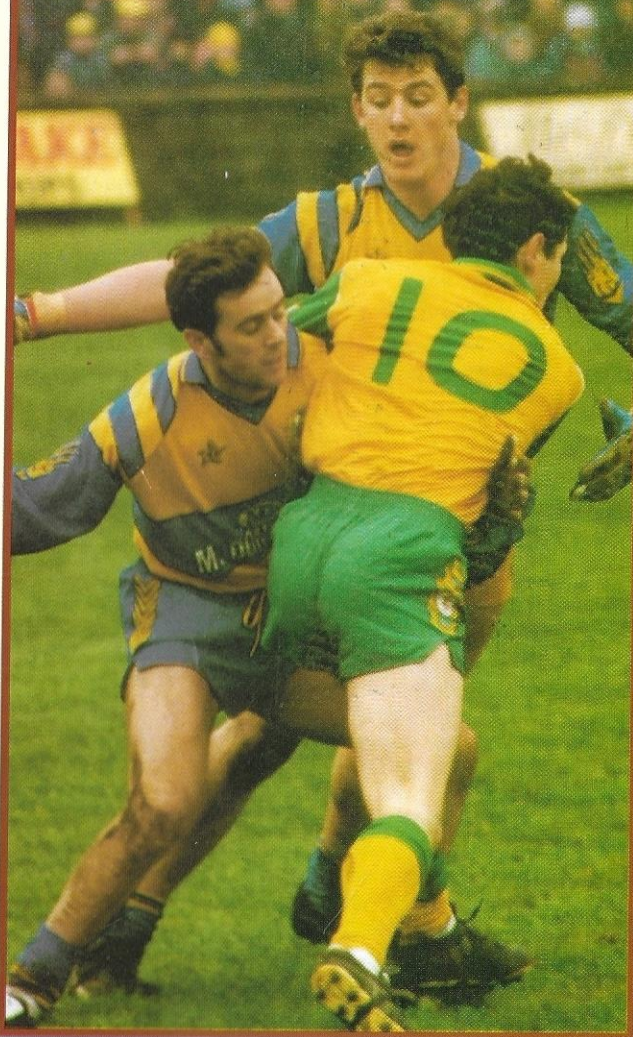
Brian White is a member of the Ratharogue-Cushinstown club in Wexford. He is a former hurler and footballer and won intermediate medals with his club in both codes.

His refereeing credentials include a Leinster football final, the NFL final and replay in 1993 between Dublin and Donegal and two All-Ireland Senior Football semi-finals — Cork v. Mayo in 1993 and Cork v. Down last year.



Fluctuating Fortunes and Consistent Performances

Brendan Rouine and "Baby" John Enright attempt to halt Donegal's James McHugh when the teams last met, at Ballyshannon in February 1994.



Few competitions demonstrate the uncertainty of team sports to quite the same extent as the National Football League which from year to year sees remarkable changes in the fortunes of many counties. Conversely, where some counties experience wild swings of fortune, others display a quite remarkable consistency. And the campaign now reaching its climax maintains these well-established trends.

The most obvious change of fortunes relates to last year's finalists, Meath and Armagh, who not alone failed to impress in the current campaign, but fared rather badly: Meath, who having shared top spot in the Division Two table before moving on to a great win in the final last season, slumped badly in the current series in the Premier division ending up in sixth place with six points from seven games.

By a coincidence, Armagh, who fought so valiantly last year only to fail in the final, had a dismal season ending up, like Meath, in sixth place, but in the Division Two table.

Dublin and Down also fell from the heights. Quarter-finalists last year (even though they lost at that stage), both have suffered the indignity of relegation — Dublin in 7th place and Down at the foot of the table after disastrous showings in most games.

But not all the fluctuations in fortunes were downward. Clare, who were second-last in the 1993-94 Division One table and were relegated, bounced back in a most impressive manner to head the Division Two table and win a place in the quarter-finals.

With Monaghan it was much the same story. They were also demoted at the end of last year's series when they finished with a meagre four points — but the drop for them was from the third to the fourth division! This season, however, they strode to the top of the heap, just ousting Sligo for the lone quarter-final spot for the Division Four champions.

CONSISTENCY

A number of other counties could be said to have maintained their form. Derry, for instance, who topped Division One in 1993-94 with 12 points, made it to second place a point behind Laois; and Donegal, quarter-finalists 12 months ago after a play-off with Down in Division One, have again 'made the cut' as the result of yet another play-off (two play-offs, in fact). And in both seasons they finished with eight points.

Kerry are another county that have shown remarkable consistency over the two campaigns — recording the same points total in each (eight points) — though they have gone at least one better this year in that they have made it to the quarter-final after a play-off (last year they came unstuck in the play-off game with Down). And Laois's good form survived their promotion to the first division at the end of last season. Indeed, the O'Moore county could be said to have improved their rating considerably — last year it was second

in Division Two with ten points — this year it is top of Division One, also with ten points.

With Tyrone, recent seasons have been joy all the way despite their failure on the matter of ultimate honours as in the space of two seasons they have won promotion from Division Three to Division One, a feat emulated by Westmeath in moving from the fourth division to the second during the same period. Mayo have traversed the opposite route, going from Division One to Division Three in two years.

Louth, lately out of the running, can also be numbered among the consistent teams; third place in the Division Two table with nine points in '94, twelve months on they shared second place with Tyrone on ten points.

As the foregoing facts indicate life is never easy and always unpredictable in the National League.

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Paddy Hegarty
(in a yellow and green jersey) in full
in the play-off
against Kildare.

GREATEST RIVALS

CLARE

Four counties — Limerick, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Waterford — have provided the opposition for almost half of the National League games in which Clare have been involved, but their greatest rivals — in terms of actual meetings — are Tipperary with whom they have clashed on 37 occasions, winning 22, drawing two, and losing 13.

DONEGAL

Although paths have not tended to cross in recent years, Fermanagh have been the most consistent rivals (as far as actual meetings are concerned) and of the 32 games they have contested, Donegal have won 20, drawn three and lost 9. Other counties that have featured strongly in the Donegal story were Derry (31 meetings) and Tyrone (25 meetings). Of their 288 league outings, 154 were against Ulster teams. Donegal's first venture outside the province was in 1937 when they reached the Division Two final, but defeat was their lot on that occasion as Longford proved too strong at Ardara.

An Clár

The Clare team which defeated Mayo in the NFL at Doonbeg last month.
Back row (l-r): Aidan Daly, Tom Morrissey, James Hanrahan, Johnny Leahy, Francis McInerney, Brendan Rouine, Denis Russell. Front row (l-r): Joe Rouine, Martin Daly, Seamus Clancy (captain), Noel Roche, John Enright, Aiden O'Keeffe, Michael Hynes, Frankie Griffin.



Quarter-Finals REPORT

Going by the official designation, quarter-finals are a quite recent development in the National League, dating back only to the mid 1970s when Kerry and Meath, and Tyrone and Monaghan were the four counties involved. For reasons related to the format at that time only two quarter-finals were played, with Tyrone beating Monaghan and Meath overcoming Kerry in a double-header at Croke Park on March 16, 1975. Since those first quarter-finals both counties have been involved in a number of ties at that stage (though not against each other). Tyrone were involved in six of these, three of which they won, while Kerry have won four of the five which they have contested. The details of these are:

1974-75			
Meath	0-11;	Kerry	0-6
Tyrone	1-9;	Monaghan	1-7
1978-79			
Offaly	3-12;	Tyrone	1-4
1981-82			
Kerry	4-6;	Clare	1-3
1983-84			
Kerry	2-11;	Longford	2-5
Down	2-8;	Tyrone	0-6
1984-85			
Tyrone	2-8;	Cavan	1-3
1988-89			
Kerry	3-10;	Antrim	1-9
1990-91			
Roscommon	1-9;	Tyrone	0-11
1991-92			
Tyrone	1-15;	Roscommon	1-10
1992-93			
Kerry	0-16;	Down	0-15

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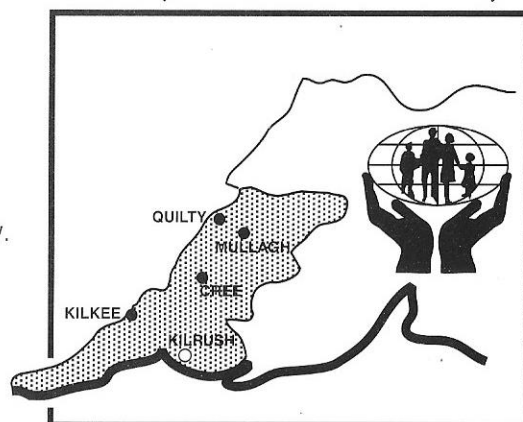
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Five Meetings — After 50 Year Wait

For more than fifty years of National League competition the paths of Donegal and Clare did not cross. Not surprisingly, as the structure of the league for much of its existence tended not to burden weaker counties with long-distance travelling, and Clare and Donegal were very much among the lesser lights for decades after the league's inception in the mid-twenties. The only possibility of a meeting was at the knock-out stages and neither county was capable of making it that far, and even when Donegal began to make an impression in the 1960s when they were semi-finalists on four occasions, Clare, alas, were very much in the doldrums.

And when they were eventually grouped together it was in the less than glamorous Division Three in 1980-81. But by the time the seventh-round tie was staged at Ballyshannon, whatever interest a first-ever meeting might have generated had well and truly evaporated as divisional honours had already been decided (Donegal having been pipped for promotion by Cavan, and Clare languishing at the foot of the table). In the circumstances it was by no means a bad contest though the home team won comfortably enough by 0-9 to 0-4.

Clare had to wait three years to avenge that defeat, which they did on an 0-8 to 0-7 scoreline at Cusack Park, but it was still Division Three fare and there was no relief for either at the end of the season, both occupying mid-table berths.

DONEGAL PROMOTED

There was a parting of the ways at the end of the 1983-84 campaign. Their league meeting in the fifth-round at Ballybofey was a vital tie for both counties as the losers could virtually bid good-bye to any realistic hopes of group honours. In the event it was Donegal who maintained an interest, their 2-8 to 0-5 win keeping them well on course, just two points behind pacemakers, Monaghan. Those two points were still to Monaghan's credit when the final tallies were made, but Donegal also made it to Division Two while Clare had to settle for fifth place in the table and another year in Division Three.

Four years were to elapse before their fourth meeting. Clare at last got it right and headed the table in the spring of '87 to gain long-sought promotion, though Donegal almost kept ahead of them, just missing the move to the top division when Derry pipped them for the spot by two points.

In retrospect, their fourth-round clash in 1987-88 was a vital game for both Donegal and Clare. Donegal's 1-7 to 0-8 win at Ballyshannon helped in no small way to get them through to the league quarter-final and into Division One, but the loss of two points was fatal to Clare's prospects and they were returned to Division Three after only twelve months.

The early nineties were heady days indeed for both counties. The championship yielded unprecedented rewards and the league campaigns were full of promise. Inevitably there was a meeting at the knock-out stage as Donegal, befitting their status as All-Ireland champions, marched purposefully towards the coveted 'double' while Clare reached new heights as they reached the semi-final for the first time in more than 40 years.

On the day there was no disputing the merit of the champions' success. Clare, with the wind could not, try as they might, assemble the necessary half-time cushion. In fact, they trailed by a point at the changeover and thereafter the game took its predictable course. Banner county hopes lingered to the 40th minute; then Barry Cunningham's shot was deflected past his own 'keeper by Aidan Maloney, and that was that. The margin at the end was only five points (1-12 to 1-7), but it hardly did justice to the winners' superiority. Donegal's win in the last meeting to date — by 0-10 to 1-5 at Ballyshannon in 1994 — was a hard-earned triumph and made the record four wins to one in their favour. But five meetings do not make Clare and Donegal one of the great rivalries of gaelic football.



An Clár

Dathanna: Ór is Gorm

Fir Ionaid

- (16) Carl Walsh
C. Breathnach
(Miltown)
- (17) Martin Keavy
M. Ó Ciabhaigh
(Kilmurray Ibrickane)
- (18) Donal O'Sullivan
D. Ó Súilleabháin
(Kilrush)
- (19) Aidan Moloney
A. Ó Maolomhnaigh
(Kilmurray Ibrickane)
- (20) Padraig Gallagher
P. Ó Gallchoir
(Doonbeg)
- (21) Aidan O'Keefe
A. Ó Caoimh
(Civil Service)
- (22) Peadar Cosgrave
P. Ó Cosraigh
(Éire Óg)
- (23) Barry Keating
B. Céitinn
(Éire Óg)
- (24) Michael Galvin
M. Ó Gealbháin
(Kilkee)

2
FRANKIE GRIFFIN
P. Mac Griffin
(Kilrush)

5
AIDAN DALY
A. Ó Dálaigh
(Kilrush)

8
TOM MORRISSEY
T. Ó Muireasa
(Cooraclare)

10
DENIS RUSSELL
D. Ruiséil
(Kilkee)

13
JOHNNY LEAHY
S. Ó Laocha
(Ennistymon)

1
JAMES HANRAHAN
S. Ó hAnracháin
(St. Joseph's Doora/Barefield)

3
BRENDAN ROUINE
B. Ó Ruáin
(Ennistymon)

6
JOE JOE ROUINE
S. S. Ó Ruáin
(Ennistymon)

11
FRANCIS McINERNEY
P. Mac an Airchinnigh
(Doonbeg)

14
COLM CLANCY
C. MacLannchaidh
(Corofin)

4
SEAMUS CLANCY
S. Mac Lannchaidh
(Corofin)

7
JOHN ENRIGHT
S. MacIonnrachtaigh
(Kilkee)

9
MICHAEL HYNES
M. Ó hEidhin
(Michael Cusacks)

12
NOEL ROCHE
N. de Róiste
(Kilkee)

15
MARTIN DALY
M. Ó Dálaigh
(Lissycasey)

Dún na nGall

Dathanna: Uaithne is Ór

1
GARY WALSH
G. Breathnach
(Burren)

2
GERARD KELLY
G. Ó Ceallaigh
(Aodh Ruadh, Killybegs)

5
JOHN CUNNINGHAM
S. MacCinneagáin
(Na Cealla Beaga)

8
MARK McSHANE
M. MacSeáin
(Cill Chartha)

10
JAMES McHUGH
S. MacAoidh
(Cill Chartha)

13
JOHN DUFFY
S. Ó Dufaigh
(Aodh Ruadh Ballyshannon)

3
MATT GALLAGHER
M. Ó Gallchoir
(Naomh Bríd)

6
NOEL HEGARTY
N. Ó hEigeartaigh
(Naomh Columba)

11
DECLAN BONNER
D. Ó Cnaimhsí
(Na Rossa)

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

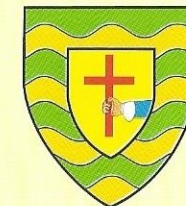
4
JOHN JOE DOHERTY
S. S. Ó Dochartaigh
(Naomh Columba)

7
MARTIN SHOVLIN
M. Ó Sheibhleáin
(Naomh Ultan)

9
BRIAN MURRAY
B. Ó Muirí
(An Stát Sheirbhis)

12
PADDY HEGARTY
P. Ó hEigeartaigh
(Naomh Columba)

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



Fir Ionaid

- (16) Paul Callaghan
P. Ó Ceallcháin
(Beart)
- (17) Tommy Ryan
T. Ó Riann
(An Tearmainn)
- (18) John Bán Gallagher
S. B. Ó Gallchoir
(Na Cealla Beaga)
- (19) Damien Diver
D. Ó Duibhir
(Ard an Ratha)
- (20) Martin Gavigan
M. Ó Gaibheaghaigh
(Ard na Ratha)
- (21) Eamon McMenamin
E. MacMenáin
(MacComhúills)
- (22) Sean Boyle
S. Ó Baoill
(Cloich Ceann Fhaola)
- (23) Damien Conlon
D. Ó Conalláin
(Aodh Ruadh Ballyshannon)
- (24) Jim McGuinness
S. MacAnghusa
(Naomh Conáil)

AN CLÁR

1adh Leath

2adh Leath

IOMLAN

Cúil

Cúillíní

Seachái

45m

Saor Ciceanna

DÚN na nGALL

1adh Leath

2adh Leath

IOMLAN

Cúil

Cúillíní

Seachái

45m

Saor Ciceanna



Paths to the Quarter-Final

Of all of today's quarter-finalists, the route taken by Donegal has been the longest. A league campaign which saw the Ulster side win four and lose three, left them in a tie with Kerry and Kildare. After a defeat to the 'Kingdom' in the first play-off game at Tuam, Donegal took the second chance offered, with an eight-point victory over the 'Lilywhites' in Clones a fortnight ago.

Clare having been demoted from the top flight last season were considered long-shots for the knock-out stages. The turning point for the 'Banner' county came in Round 1 when, trailing Cork by five points after 58 minutes, they scored two late goals to steal the points. They went on to top Division Two with five wins and a draw from their seven outings.

The records of both counties are:

Clare

Round 1 at Páirc Uí Rinn: Beat Cork by 2-7 to 0-12

Scorers — S. McInerney 1-2, Aidan O'Keefe 1-0, Ger Keane 0-2, Gerry Kelly 0-1, D. O'Sullivan 0-1, Denis Russell 0-1

Round 2 at Cusack Park: Beat Leitrim by 1-9 to 0-4

Scorers — Martin Daly 1-2, Aidan O'Keefe 0-3, Denis Russell 0-2, S. McInerney 0-1, N. Roche 0-1

Round 3 at Athletic Grounds: Drew with Clare 2-6 to 3-3

Scorers — Martin Daly 1-1, Gerry Kelly 1-0, Aidan O'Keefe 0-2, G. O'Keefe 0-2, Denis Russell 0-1

Round 4 at Cusack Park: Beat Louth by 0-9 to 0-4

Scorers — Denis Russell 0-2, Martin Keavey 0-2, Gerry Kelly 0-1, Aidan O'Keefe 0-1, Tom Morrissey 0-1, C. Clancy 0-1, Francis McInerney 0-1

Round 5 at Dungannon: Lost to Tyrone by 0-8 to 0-15

Scorers — Aidan O'Keefe 0-5, Denis Russell 0-1, Martin Keavey 0-1, C. Clancy 0-1

Round 6 at Doonbeg: Beat Mayo by 0-15 to 1-7

Scorers — Aidan O'Keefe 0-5, Francis McInerney 0-5, Denis Russell 0-2, Martin Daly 0-2, J. Leahy 0-1

Round 7 at Cusack Park: Beat Galway by 2-10 to 2-2

Scorers — Aidan O'Keefe 1-5, Martin Daly 1-1, Denis Russell 0-2, C. Clancy 0-1, M. Hynes 0-1

Total Scored 7-64 (85); Total Conceded 6-47 (65)

Scorers — Aidan O'Keefe 2-21, Martin Daly 3-6, Denis Russell 0-11, Francis McInerney 0-6, S. McInerney 1-3, Gerry Kelly 1-2, Martin Keavey 0-3, C. Clancy 0-3, G. O'Keefe 0-2, Ger Keane 0-2, D. O'Sullivan 0-1, N. Roche 0-1, Tom Morrissey 0-1, J. Leahy 0-1, M. Hynes 0-1.

Donegal

Round 1 at Newry: Beat Down by 0-8 to 0-7

Scorers — Declan Bonner 0-3, John Duffy 0-2, Manus Boyle 0-2, Brian Murray 0-1

Round 2 at Ballybofey: Beat Derry by 0-15 to 2-6

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-4, John Duffy 0-3, John Gildea 0-3, Tony Boyle 0-2, Declan Bonner 0-2, Mark McShane 0-1

Round 3 at Croke Park: Beat Dublin 0-12 to 1-8

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-5, Tony Boyle 0-3, John Duffy 0-2, Declan Bonner 0-2

Round 4 at Ballybofey: Lost to Kildare by 1-8 to 1-11

Scorers — Declan Bonner 1-2, Manus Boyle 0-3, Mark McShane 0-2, Tony Boyle 0-1

Round 5 at Portlaoise: Lost to Laois by 0-8 to 0-10

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-3, John Duffy 0-2, Declan Bonner 0-1, Brian Murray 0-1, John Gildea 0-1

Round 6 at Navan: Beat Meath by 0-13 to 0-11

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-5, Tony Boyle 0-3, Declan Bonner 0-2, John Duffy 0-1, Mark McShane 0-1, Paddy Hegarty 0-1

Round 7 at Ballyshannon: Lost to Kerry by 0-10 to 0-14

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-4, Declan Bonner 0-2, Brian Murray 0-2, John Duffy 0-1, Mark McShane 0-1

Play-Off at Tuam: Lost to Kerry by 1-8 to 1-10

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-4, T.J. Ryan 1-0, Declan Bonner 0-2, John Duffy 0-1, Noel Hegarty 0-1

Play-Off at Clones: Beat Kildare by 1-16 to 0-11

Scorers — John Duffy 0-5, Manus Boyle 0-5, Brian Murray 1-1, Mark McShane 0-2, John Gallagher 0-2, James McHugh 0-1

Total Scored 3-98 (107); Total Conceded 5-88 (103)

Scorers — Manus Boyle 0-35, Declan Bonner 1-16, John Duffy 0-17, Tony Boyle 0-9, Brian Murray 1-5, Mark McShane 0-7, John Gildea 0-4, T.J. Ryan 1-0, John Gallagher 0-2, Noel Hegarty 0-1, Paddy Hegarty 0-1, James McHugh 0-1

The Northern Question

In an open competition like the National League where provincial boundaries do not exist, it is remarkable that Clare, apart from the 1947 final meeting which resulted from the decision of the Central Council to 'short-circuit' the campaign because of prolonged bad weather, did not encounter Ulster opposition until as recently as 1976 and then it was at the knock-out stage. In fact, it was in a final — the Division Three final which Clare had reached with an unbeaten record in their group and it was Armagh who provided the opposition. At the end of an entertaining hour a decision was deferred (Clare 1-6; Armagh 0-9) to the following Sunday when Armagh shaded the verdict (1-7 to 1-6).

But the Banner county, however, had to wait a further seven years to record a first win over an Ulster county — when they beat Fermanagh in the 1982-83 seventh-round tie at Irvinestown.

In recent years Clare have crossed the paths of all nine Ulster counties encompassing 24 games, the results of which were:

	P	W	D	L
Donegal	6	1	0	5
Armagh	3	0	2	1
Cavan	3	0	1	2
Down	3	1	2	0
Derry	3	0	1	2
Fermanagh	2	1	0	1
Monaghan	2	1	0	1
Antrim	1	0	0	1
Tyrone	1	0	0	1

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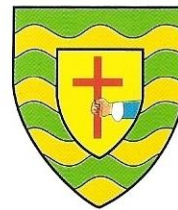
G. O'Doherty

Kilrush Division,

Cappa Road, Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Tel: 065 51008. Fax: 065 51301.

The Donegal team which defeated Kildare in the play-off at Clones. Back row (l-r): John Duffy, Mark Crossan, Brian Murray, Gary Walsh, Gerard Kelly, Barry MacGowan, John Joe Doherty, Tomás Ryan. Front row (l-r): Matt Gallagher, Noel Hegarty, John Cunningham, Manus Boyle, Paddy Hegarty, Mark McShane, James McHugh.

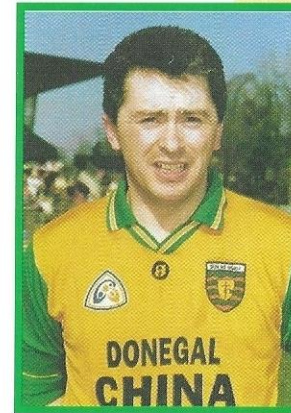


WINNING MARGINS... LOSING MARGINS

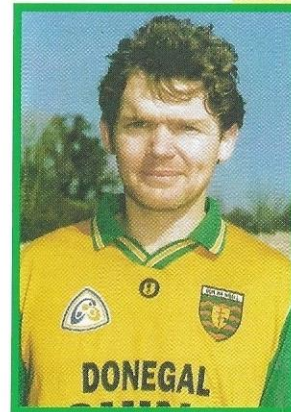
Unlike most counties, Donegal teams — and especially in recent years — have not tended to record or concede huge scores in league or championship, though, strangely, in the 1930s when their fortunes were at a low ebb, they were involved in games in which flags — for and against — ran freely.

And it was in that decade that Donegal chalked up their biggest winning margin in the National League when on home soil at Ballybofey they trounced Fermanagh by 17 points in the first-round tie of the 1931-32 campaign.

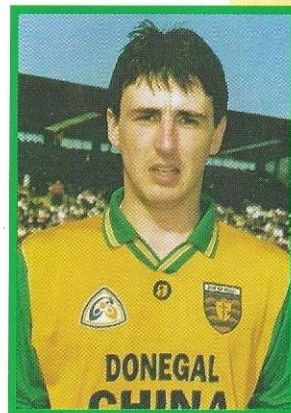
And it was also in a first-round game that Donegal suffered their heaviest defeat. On their first-ever appearance at a Connacht venue — at Sligo in 1938 they had no answer to the home county and finished the hour 21 points adrift, 1-4 to 6-10.



● Tommy Ryan



● Matt Gallagher



● Mark Crossan

DONEGAL'S AVERSION

As the records show, most counties have been involved in drawn games in the National League on more or less a regular basis and it is most unusual for a county to go three or four years without finishing an hour on level terms with some opposition. But this certainly didn't apply to Donegal who went more than 40 years without stalemate in the National League. A drawn game with Tyrone in 1926 must have cre-

ated an aversion to deadlock with Donegal as, for the next 47 years, it was either win or lose, until things changed in the 1973-74 campaign in which the record of almost half a century was broken when Donegal and Laois finished level in the second-round tie at Ballyshannon. Ironically, a few years later Donegal, having tasted 'honours even', were involved in three remarkable drawn games in one campaign — with Sligo (0-7 to 1-4), Leitrim (0-5 all) and Fermanagh (0-6 all). Certainly a change from the early years.

DONEGAL DETAILS

Donegal made their league debut in the first-ever National League campaign when they opposed Cavan at Ballyshannon on November 15, 1925. But Donegal did not become National League regulars immediately and for most of the period preceding the break for the Emergency they were mainly involved in league competitions confined to the weaker counties in Ulster.

However, after the resumption in 1945 they gradually made an impression and over the past 50 years they have clashed with all but three counties — Limerick, Kilkenny and Waterford. To date they have played 288 National League games the record of which reads — Won 147; Drawn 23; and Lost 118.

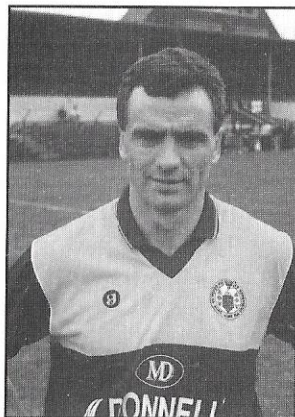
AGGREGATE REPORT

Not surprisingly, a team that reached the quarter-finals topped the list of aggregate scores at the end of the divisional section. Monaghan's 10-95 (125 points) is certainly an impressive return, nine points ahead of second-place Wicklow and a massive 30 points better than Laois's 6-77, the next qualifier in line. Interestingly, Laois, Tyrone, Kerry and Clare are all grouped together among the first nine, but Cavan, Derry and Donegal are strung well down the list with Donegal in the bottom half with a quite modest 77 points.

In the matter of average per game, Monaghan also show the way on 15.63, slightly more than two points per game better than Laois. Although it is hardly news now after the much-publicised events of recent weeks, it will be noted from the chart that All-Ireland champions Down are lodged at the very bottom with a tiny 56 points from seven games plus an average just slightly better than London's 7.88.



● John Cunningham (Dún na nGall)



● Noel Roche (An Clár)

	Score	Total	Games	Average
Monaghan	10-95	125	8	15.63
Wicklow	8-79	116	8	14.5
Carlow	7-79	100	8	12.5
Sligo	10-69	99	8	12.38
Offaly	7-76	97	8	12.13
Laois	6-77	95	7	13.57
Tyrone	7-71	92	7	13.14
Kerry	5-76	91	7	13
Clare	7-64	85	7	12.14
Roscommon	2-78	84	7	12
Armagh	8-59	83	7	11.86
Cavan	6-65	83	7	11.86
Westmeath	10-51	81	7	11.57
Waterford	6-63	81	8	10.13
Derry	5-63	78	7	11.14
Louth	5-63	78	7	11.14
Cork	5-63	78	7	11.14
Donegal	1-74	77	7	11
Dublin	4-65	77	7	11
Antrim	2-71	77	7	11
Kildare	5-61	76	7	10.86
Fermanagh	4-64	76	7	10.86
Wexford	6-56	74	7	10.57
Longford	4-57	69	7	9.86
Limerick	3-60	69	8	8.62
Meath	1-63	66	7	9.43
Tipperary	5-51	66	7	9.43
Kilkenny	4-53	65	8	8.13
Mayo	5-49	64	7	9.14
London	5-48	63	8	7.88
Galway	2-56	62	7	8.86
Leitrim	2-53	59	7	8.43
Down	2-48	56	7	8



LEAGUE LORE

Apart from two seasons in the mid-Fifties, when they opted out, Clare have competed in the National League since the competition was inaugurated in 1925. They made their debut at Miltown Malbay against Kerry, but were beaten by 3-6 to 0-4. Over the years since then they have encountered all 31 counties and in all have played a total of 270 games from which their record reads:

Won — 125; Lost — 123;
Drawn — 22.

● "The Bodhran Baters" — Clare's colourful and musical supporters return to McHale Park today after a two-year absence.

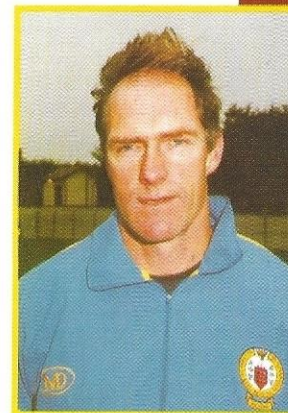


A LONG WAIT

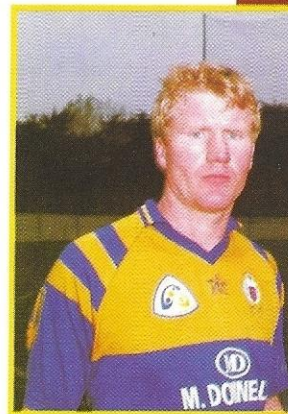
For decades Mayo were as big a bogey team to the Banner county as Kerry. Paths first crossed in 1936 when the newly-crowned All-Ireland champions visited Ennis for the second round of the league. Mayo won that game by a margin of eight points and for the next 57 years Clare were seeking their first ever win over the Connachtmen. And that long-sought win finally came when Clare emerged victorious from the 1993 quarter-final clash at Castlebar. But having waited so long, Clare kept up the good work and have won the most recent meetings to leave it nine-three in Mayo's favour.

Bogey Opposition

Clare have recorded victories over 23 different counties. They have yet to gain a verdict against eight counties with Kerry their most persistent tormentors. Of the 12 meetings with the "Kingdom" they have lost eleven and drawn one. The other counties with whom Clare have a 'debit balance' are Offaly, Roscommon, Kildare, Armagh, Cavan, Antrim and Tyrone.



● John O'Keeffe, Clare Manager



● Seamus Clancy (An Clár)



● James Hanrahan (An Clár)

ROUND BY ROUND

As the campaign unfolded, the pattern of future developments soon became apparent with counties like Donegal, Monaghan, Laois and Louth recording significant feats along the way. The chart below outlines the highlights of the league at every stage of the competition.

ROUND 1

Top Score:
Fermanagh 1-19 v Longford at Enniskillen
Biggest Winning Margin:
14 pts (Fermanagh 1-19 Longford 0-8)
Highest Aggregate:
35 pts (Louth 1-17 Galway 0-15)
Lowest Aggregate:
15 pts (Donegal 0-8 Down 0-7)
Goalless Games:
Two
Home Wins:
12
Away Wins:
Four
Draws:
None

ROUND 2

Top Score:
Laois 2-14 v Down at Portlaoise
Monaghan 3-11 v Carlow at Dr Cullen Park
Biggest Winning Margin:
10 pts (Monaghan 3-11 Carlow 1-7)
Highest Aggregate:
31 pts (Laois 2-14 Down 0-11)
Lowest Aggregate:
16 pts (Clare 1-9 Leitrim 0-4)
Goalless Games:
Four
Home Wins:
Eight
Away Wins:
Eight
Draws:
None

ROUND 3

Top Score:
Wicklow 1-14 v London at Auhgrim
Biggest Winning Margin:
14 pts (Wicklow 1-14 London 0-3)
Highest Aggregate:
27 pts (Waterford 2-9 Offaly 2-6)
Lowest Aggregate:
12 pts (Down 0-8 Meath 0-4)
Goalless Games:
Three
Home Wins:
Eleven
Away Wins:
Three
Draws:
Two

ROUND 4

Top Score:
Monaghan 2-13 v London at Ruislip
Biggest Winning Margin:
8 pts (Monaghan 2-13 London 1-8)
(Carlow 1-13 Waterford 1-5)
Highest Aggregate:
30 pts (Monaghan 2-13 London 1-8)
(Cavan 2-11 Longford 2-7)
Lowest Aggregate:
13 pts (Clare 0-9 Leitrim 0-4)
(Kilkenny 0-7 Limerick 0-6)
Goalless Games:
Six
Home Wins:
Seven
Away Wins:
Nine
Draws:
None

ROUND 5

Top Score:
Monaghan 1-13 v Sligo at Scotstwon
Biggest Winning Margin:
7 pts (Monaghan 1-13 Sligo 1-6)
(Waterford 1-12 Kilkenny 0-8)
(Tyrone 0-15 Clare 0-8)
Highest Aggregate:
26 pts (Wexford 1-11 Antrim 0-12)
(Cavan 1-12 Westmeath 2-5)
Lowest Aggregate:
14 pts (Carlow 0-10 London 0-4)
Goalless Games:
Eight

Home Wins:
Eleven
Away Wins:
Three
Draws:
Two

ROUND 6

Top Score:
2-13 Tyrone v Galway at Tuam
Biggest Winning Margin:
15 pts (Tyrone 2-13 Galway 0-4)
Highest Aggregate:
25 pts (Antrim 1-12 Tipperary 0-11)
Lowest Aggregate:
11 pts (Dublin 1-7 Down 0-1)
Goalless Games:
Three
Home Wins:
Three
Away Wins:
Nine
Draws:
Three

ROUND 7

Top Score:
3-11 Tyrone v Mayo at Dungannon
Biggest Winning Margin:
12 pts (Tyrone 3-11 Mayo 1-5)
Highest Aggregate:
28 pts (Tyrone 3-11 Mayo 1-5)
(Armagh 3-9 Leitrim 0-10)
Lowest Aggregate:
14 pts (Sligo 0-7 Carlow 0-7)
Goalless Games:
Four
Home Wins:
Ten
Away Wins:
Three
Draws:
Three

SUMMARY

Top Score:
Fermanagh 1-19 v Longford (Round One)
Biggest Winning Margin:
Tyrone's 15 points v Galway (Round Six)
Highest Aggregate:
35 points — Louth 1-17 Galway 0-15 (Round One)
Lowest Aggregate:
11 points — Dublin 1-7 Down 0-1 (Round Six)
Goalless Games:
30
Home Wins:
62
Away Wins:
39
Draws: Ten

The odd games brought about by the inclusion of nine teams in Division Four are not included in the above report.

TOP SCORERS

As has been the norm over the past couple of seasons, the outstanding marksman of the league campaign tends to come from Division Four. And so it is that this year, Conan Daye of Wicklow heads both that division's and the overall standings with a truly magnificent 5-41 (56 points), averaging seven points per game. His nearest rival is Ronan Carolan whose total of 1-36 is amazingly, exactly the same total as the Cavan man had notched in last year's league section.

Damien Delaney, who topped Division Two last season appears likewise in the premier division, and others to prove that operating in a higher division is no barrier to a proven marksman are Adrian Cush, Ger Heavin and Michael O'Brien, although it must be admitted that the rate of return has diminished somewhat.

This list of top marksmen in the league section of the competition refers to the leading flag-raiser of each county and these 33 players are not necessarily the leading marksmen overall. Scores recorded in the play-off ties are not included in this chart.

DIVISION ONE

Damien Delaney (Laois) 0-28
Manus Boyle (Donegal) 0-26
Niall Buckley (Kildare) 1-18
Tommy Dowd (Meath) 0-16
Conor O'Donnell (Kerry) 2-10
Charlie Redmond (Dublin) 0-15
Eamonn Burns (Derry) 1-12
Gregory McCartan (Down) 0-13

DIVISION TWO

Oisín McConville (Armagh) 2-25
Adrian Cush (Tyrone) 1-26
Colin Corkery (Cork) 0-27
Aidan O'Keefe (Clare) 2-21
Colin Kelly (Louth) 2-16
Padraig Brogan (Mayo) 1-17
Shay Walsh (Galway) 0-18
Brian Breen (Leitrim) 0-14

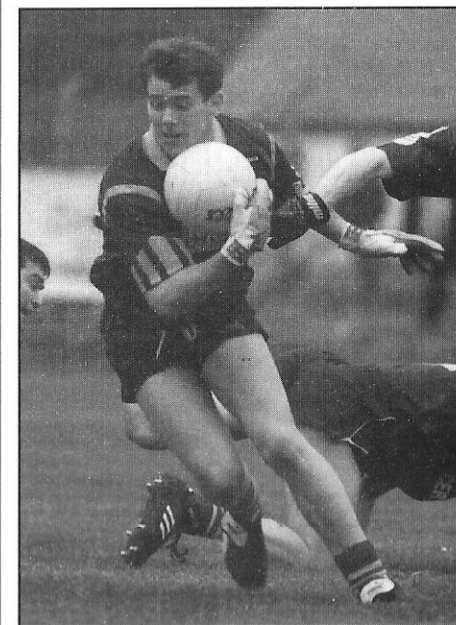
DIVISION THREE

Ronan Carolan (Cavan) 1-36
Ger Heavin (Westmeath) 3-25
Derek Duggan (Roscommon) 0-22
Michael O'Brien (Longford) 0-21
Peter Lambert (Tipperary) 2-14
John McManus (Antrim) 0-19
Scott Doran (Wexford) 3-10
Mark Gallagher (Fermanagh) 2-9

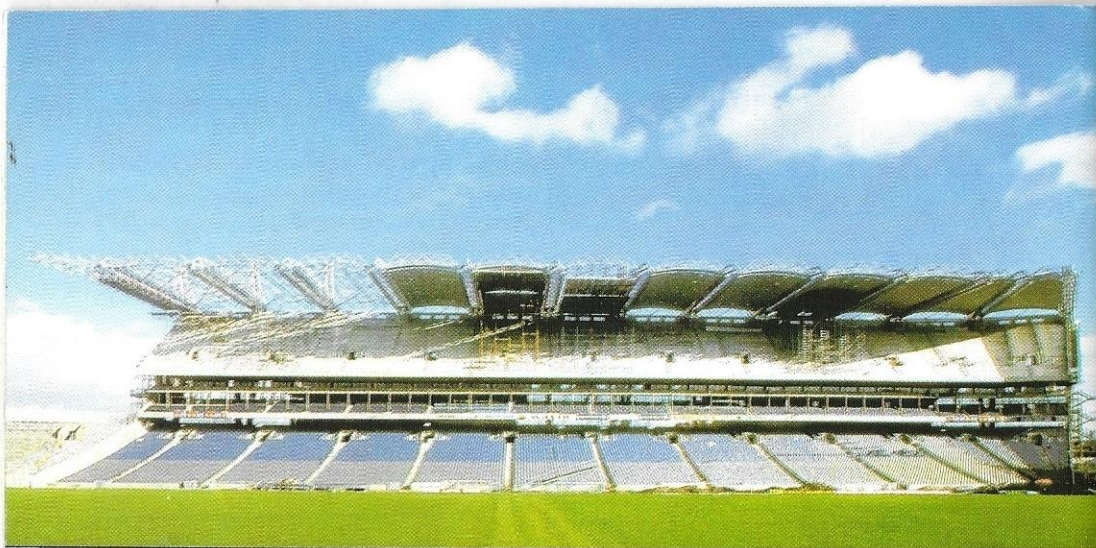
DIVISION FOUR

Conan Daye (Wicklow) 5-41
Ian Larmer (Monaghan) 2-26
Damien Walsh (Kilkenny) 1-28
Pat Daly (Offaly) 0-30
Peter Ferncombe (Waterford) 0-26
Martin McGrath (Sligo) 2-19
Pat Gavin (Limerick) 2-18
Johnny Nevin (Carlow) 0-19
Eamonn Prenter (London) 0-10

**NB It should be noted that in one county (Dublin) there was a tie for top scorer as Dessie Farrell notched 1-12 to equal Charlie Redmond's 15 points.*



● The NFL's leading scorer so far with 5-41 — Conan Daye (Cill Mhantáin).



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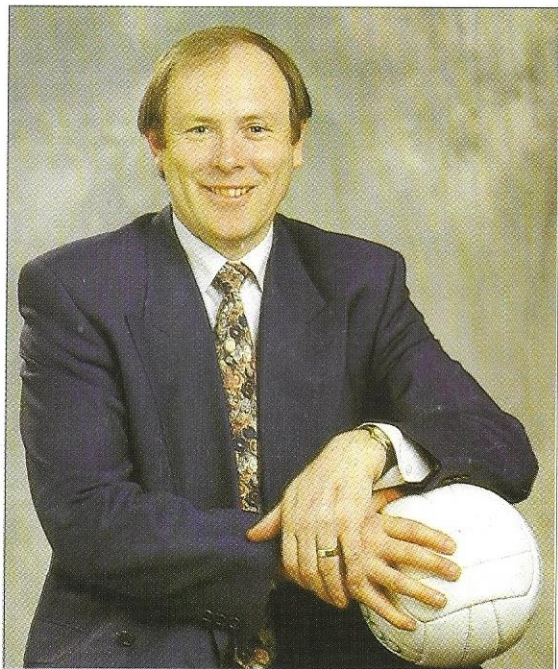
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