



WHERE WE ALL BELONG



**SRAITH ALLIANZ 2020**  
2020 Allianz Football League  
Roinn 1 - Babhta 7

# CIARRAÍ v DÚN NA NGALL

Photo: Kerry's Eye

**TOSNÚ: 14:00**

**RÉITEOIR:**  
Conor Lane  
(Corcaigh)

**IONAD:** Páirc Aibhistín De Staic, Trá Lí  
Dé Satharn, 24ú Deireadh Fomhair 2020

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Killian Spillane (Ciarraí) in action against Odhran McFadden Ferry (Dún na nGall) during the 2019 All-Ireland SFC Quarter-Final at Croke Park. Photo: Kerry's Eye

# Kerry closing in on another League title

By **MURT MURPHY**

In normal times, this would have been an eagerly anticipated contest between Donegal and Kerry, with a big crowd turning up to watch both sides go to war at the Austin Stack Park on Saturday. The game would probably be on a Sunday but this time around, it is on a Saturday as the Donegal contingent face a return trip of close to 1000 kilometers to the Kingdom.

But because we living through a pandemic, the goalposts have been shifted and the league is being finished ten months after it began. Players have been through tough club programs and collective training only resumed in mid September. There are a raft of health and safety protocols that must be met so credit the players for the manner in which they have looked after themselves off the field and the way they have conducted themselves on the field. To add to the surreal nature of the fixture it will be played in an empty stadium.

Kerry made the long trip to Monaghan last weekend and came back with two vital league points and thanks

to Mayo's big win over Galway, they sit proudly on top of the Allianz Division 1 table. Donegal were in relegation difficulties coming into their game with Tyrone last weekend, but a win and results elsewhere has meant safety and that was what manager Declan Bonner wanted before embarking on the long trek to paradise.

So for Kerry the mathematics are Junior Cert pass. If Kerry beat Donegal on Saturday, they will be crowned league champions for the 21st time, which will see them move to the top of the roll of honour, one ahead of Dublin and Galway. It will also be the first time Kerry can win a national title on home soil. A draw might even do but the reality is that Peter Keane will be hell bent on winning and letting nothing to chance.

For Donegal, they may well be on the horns of a dilemma. They have secured their Division 1 status for 2021 so there is nothing but pride at stake. But Donegal are a proud county and they want to maintain the integrity of the league by giving it their best shot and beating the Kingdom in their own backyard.

But they have a desperately poor record in trying to raid Kerry's coup when they visit the home of Gaelic Football. They beat Kerry in their first visit to the Austin Stack Park in November 1988 by 1-10 to 0-11 but on eight visits since they have lost and had to make the long trip home empty handed. So the stats are very much against Donegal but in this strange year, it might be time for them to get one back despite it being a long time between drinks.

Donegal have another horn of that dilemma to wrestle with and that is the small matter of the Ulster Championship rematch with Tyrone the following week. That is their most important target and any player with any slight niggles will not be risked one would imagine. Will Declan Bonner rest other key players knowing that there is nothing at stake for his side while Tyrone will be involved in a war for survival the following day in Castlebar? It's difficult to know how strong a side Donegal will field but rest assured it will be competitive and even dangerous as squad players will be trying to impress their manager with the Championship in mind, so Kerry should not in any way underestimate Donegal.

"We could have done without the match," Bonner said. "It's Division 1 of the National League, the second most important competition so we'll fulfill the fixture. We're in a fortunate enough position that we're fit enough to go out there and represent the county amid the doom and gloom. We see it as a privilege that we are fit to go

and represent Donegal so we'll fulfill the fixture. But there will be a number of changes, no doubt."

The journey will be an arduous one, with Jason McGee for example having to undertake a 928km round trip from his home in Falcarragh to Austin Stack Park, while last week's unused substitute Conor O'Donnell from Carndonagh faces an arduous 974km. Michael Langan and Patrick McBrearty were absentees with knocks on Sunday and will be assessed later this week.

"We have to take everything into consideration and the risk factor of having lads together on a bus for a long period of time," Bonner added. "Any slip-up at this stage and the Championship could be gone. We have to be very careful. We will travel individually. It's not easy," Patrick McBrearty and Michael Langan will hardly be risked so making any solid predictions on who will or will not play is futile.

Turning to Kerry, Peter Keane will be happy to have left Monaghan with a brace points and as far as is known, no major injury worries. So his dilemma will be whether to stick or twist. Will he recall a fit again Jack Barry and Stephen O'Brien with the trip the Banks of the Lee in two weeks on his mind? Paul Geaney is unlikely to feature but will Peter decide to give Paudie Clifford a start on a pitch where he has excelled with East Kerry over the past two years.

Maybe Keane will take a look at newbie's Joe O'Connor and Kevin O'Sullivan or giving Mike Breen or Graham O'Sullivan a run. Gavin Crowley is probably close to full fitness but my guess is that the Kerry boss will go with a strong side as there is a national title at stake and who knows, it might be the only one completed this year.

**VERDICT:** It might be deemed home town call but considering Donegal really don't want this game or pick up any injuries, I reckon Kerry have to be favourites to win but it may not be as easy as some Kerry supporters imagine.

Paul Geaney (Ciarraí) goes past the challenge of Caolan Ward (Dún na nGall) during the 2019 All-Ireland SFC Quarter-Final at Croke Park. Photo: Kerry's Eye



# ALLIANZ FOOTBALL LEAGUE ROINN 1 BABHTA 7



## CIARRAÍ



**1**  
S. Ó Riain  
**Shane Ryan**  
Ráth Mhór

**2**  
J. Ó Foghlú  
**Jason Foley**  
Baile Uí Donnachú

**3**  
T. Ó Muraile  
**Tadhg Morley**  
Teampall Nua

**4**  
T. Ó Súilleabháin  
**Tom O'Sullivan**  
Daingean Uí Chúis

**5**  
P. Ó Murchú  
**Paul Murphy**  
Ráth Mhór

**6**  
P. Ó Cruaaloích  
**Peter Crowley**  
Faniuíte Na Leamhna

**7**  
G. de Faoite  
**Gavin White**  
Dr. Crócaigh

**8**  
D. Ó Moráin  
**David Moran**  
Ceirín Uí Rathille

**9**  
D. Ó Conchúir  
**Diarmuid O'Connor**  
Na Gaeil

**10**  
M. Ó Braoin  
**Micheál Burns**  
Dr. Crócaigh

**11**  
S. Ó Sé  
**Seán O'Shea**  
An Neidín

**12**  
R. Ó Buachalla  
**Ronan Buckley**  
Lios A'Trói

**13**  
A. Ó Brosnacháin  
**Tony Brosnan**  
Dr. Crócaigh

**14**  
D. Ó Clúmháin  
**David Clifford (C)**  
Fosadh

**15**  
D. Ó Muineacháin  
**Dara Moynihan**  
Spá, Cill Áirne

## FIR IONAIÐ

16. B. Ó Ceallaigh  
**Brian Kelly**  
An Leigúin, Cill Áirne
17. G. Ó Cruaaloích  
**Gavin Crowley**  
Teampall Nua
18. C. Ó Spealáin  
**Killian Spillane**  
Teampall Nua
19. B. Ó Beaglaíoch  
**Brian Ó Beaglaíoch**  
An Ghaeltacht
20. S. Mac Ionrachtaigh  
**Shane Enright**  
Tairbearr
21. T. Breathnach  
**Tommy Walsh**  
Ceirín Uí Rathille
22. S. Ó Laighin  
**Jonathan Lyne**  
An Léigúin, Cill Áirne
23. G. Ó Súilleabháin  
**Graham O'Sullivan**  
Piarasigh Na Dromoda
24. S. de Barra  
**Jack Barry**  
Na Gaeil
25. S. Ó Briain  
**Stephen O'Brien**  
An Neidín
26. P. Ó Clúmháin  
**Paudie Clifford**  
Fosadh

## BAINISTÍOCHT:

**Bainisteoir:** Peter Keane;  
**Maor Fóirne/Roghnóir:** Tommy Griffin;  
**Roghnóirí:** Maurice Fitzgerald, James Foley.

	Cúil	Cúilíní	Seachaí	45m	Saor Ciceanna
1 Ach Leath					
2 Ach Leath					
Iomlán					



# DÚN NA NGALL



## FIR IONAIÐ

16. M. Ó Loinsigh  
**Michael Lynch**  
Naomh Colmcille
17. J. Mac Ceallbhuí  
**Jaic McKelvey**  
Naomh Conaill
18. E. Mac Aodha  
**Eoin McHugh**  
Cill Chartha
19. A. Mac Leáinn  
**Andrew McClean**  
Cill Chartha
20. C. Ó Domhnaill  
**Conor O'Donnell**  
Carn Domhnach
21. E. Ó Domhnaill  
**Ethan O'Donnell**  
Naomh Conaill
22. C. Ó Duibhir  
**Ciaran Diver**  
Bun an Phobail
23. A. Mac Pháidín  
**Hugh McFadden**  
Na Cealla Beaga



1  
S. Ó Peatáin  
**Shaun Patton**  
Naomh Adhamhnáin



2  
P. Mac Craith  
**Paddy McGrath**  
Ard an Ratha



3  
B. Mac Cumhaill  
**Brendan McCole**  
Naomh Náille



4  
S. Mac Meanman  
**Stephen McMenamin**  
Aodh Rua, Cúil na gCurridín



5  
C. Mac an Bháird  
**Caolan Ward**  
Naomh Adhamhnáin



6  
É. Ó Dochartaigh  
**Eamonn Doherty**  
Naomh Adhamhnáin



7  
D. Ó Baoill  
**Daire Ó Baoill**  
Gaoth Dobhair



8  
C. MacGonagail  
**Caolan McGonigle**  
Bun Cranncha



9  
D. Mac Aoidh  
**Jason McGee**  
Cloich Ceann Fhaola



10  
P. Ó Mogain  
**Peadar Mogan**  
Naomh Náille



11  
N. Ó Domhnaill  
**Niall O'Donnell**  
Naomh Adhamhnáin



12  
C. Mac Thomáis  
**Ciaran Thompson**  
Naomh Conaill



13  
J. Ó Braonáin  
**Jamie Brennan**  
Realt na Mara, Bun Dobhrain



14  
M. Ó Longáin  
**Michael Langan**  
Naomh Mícheál



15  
O. Ó Gallín  
**Oisín Gallen**  
Sean MacCumhaills

## BAINISTÍOCHT:

**Bainisteoir:** Declan Bonner;  
**Maor Fóirne/ Roghnóir:** Stephen Rochford;  
**Roghnóirí:** Paul McGonigle, Karl Lacey.

	Cúil	Cúilíní	Seachaí	45m	Saor Ciceanna
1 Adh Leath					
2 Adh Leath					
Iomlán					

# COURAGE

3 - 1 2

# FEAR

1 0 9



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