



CONNACHT FINAL 2010

• Roscommon v Sligo • McHale Park, Castlebar • Throw-in: 4pm



Roscommon can cause a shock

This coming Sunday we will see the first Connacht SF final since 1947 without Galway or Mayo taking part and it promises to be a great occasion. Roscommon have taken advantage of an easy draw to get to the final this year while Sligo have powered their

way past Mayo and Galway to reach the decider.

Kevin Walsh has done a marvellous job as Sligo manager since he was appointed. They have been promoted in the league from Division 4 to Division 2 and not only that, but they have done really well in the championship too and last year they should have knocked out Kerry in Tralee.

Walsh has a big panel that he is not afraid to use, and he is also very quick on the line to make changes and he has changed his team around from one game to the next. There is huge competition for places on the Sligo team now and he also has David Kelly up front who is a real gem of a player. The capability or otherwise of the Roscommon defence to curtail him will have a huge bearing on Sunday's result.

At the time of writing I haven't seen the Roscommon team but if the past is anything to go by I don't expect many changes. But Roscommon can take heart from the great displays in recent weeks from teams like Louth, Wexford, and Limerick. Roscommon have just as good players as any of those teams. If we approach Sunday's game with the right attitude and in a positive frame of mind, there is no reason why we cannot cause a shock. We should not be intimidated mentally by this game. In fact Sligo will be most uncomfortable with the favourites tag.

They are sitting ducks for us if we go into the game with the right approach.

The team who wins breaking ball in the middle third of the field will win this Connacht final. There has been a hesitancy in Roscommon's play this year and that aspect will have to be gone on Sunday if we are to win. We have to get the devil back into our play. If we can rediscover the traditional Roscommon fighting spirit and contest every ball as if our lives depended on it, we will win the game, simple as that. Some of our players will have to step up to the mark more than they have ever done before, but I am convinced that we have the panel of players to win this final.

Roscommon are 70 minutes from winning an unlikely Connacht title. I expect Roscommon to rise to the occasion and maybe the free taking and general score taking ability of Donie Shine might tip the balance in our favour.

Louth robbed

What a truly unbelievable Leinster football final we had on Sunday last when Louth were robbed of their first Leinster title in 50 years. The only real justice this week would be served if Louth were actually awarded the title. The least they deserve is a replay but that's unlikely now.

The GAA are totally wrong to argue that they have no say in the outcome of the game. They left it to an incompetent referee to be the final arbiter, which is madness. Meath have done themselves no favours by their stance on a replay, and like France in the World Cup, they will probably have no luck in the rest of the competition.

Overall it was not the referee who was at fault for Sunday's farce, it was the people who appointed him. The chairman of the CCCC is Seamus Woods – a Tyrone man – so is it any surprise that Mr Sludden – another Tyrone man – was appointed to referee this game? Mr Sludden was clearly not up to the required standard and his reluctance to consult with his umpires was quite unbelievable.

There is no excuse for assaults of any kind in any arena, but the Louth supporters who came on the field and pushed Mr Sludden got the blame. But he was partly to blame himself too as all he seemed to be interested in doing was taking the names of Louth players instead of getting off the field. He was even reluctant to leave the field when the Gardai arrived on the scene.

Referees for big GAA games are not picked on their ability to do the job. They are picked because they know people on the relevant committee. When they are appointed to these

big games, they should realise that with the free lunch comes responsibility to do a proper job. I hear plenty of people who are saying they feel sorry for Mr Sludden, but what about Peter Fitzpatrick and the Louth players who have been treated disgracefully without any recourse to justice?

The role of the umpires will also have to be questioned. The two umpires last Sunday stood like spectators and offered no opinion at all. There should be a better way of selecting umpires other than the fact that they are the relatives and friends of the referee and that when they are on a big day out they have a responsibility to do the job properly.

Minor delight

Finally, well done to Longford minor footballers on a marvellous win in the Leinster championship last Sunday in Croke Park. It is great to see a smaller county win a big title and it is a great story considering that they were beaten by 20 points earlier in the championship. If that happened in Connacht they would not have got a second chance. Then again it must be very difficult to organise a proper minor football championship in a province that has all of five counties involved!



Tony Mac talks GAA

Best wishes to Roscommon in the Connacht Final

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**Cllr. Tony Ward,
Nora and family**

Would like to wish the Roscommon team
all the best in the Connacht Final

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