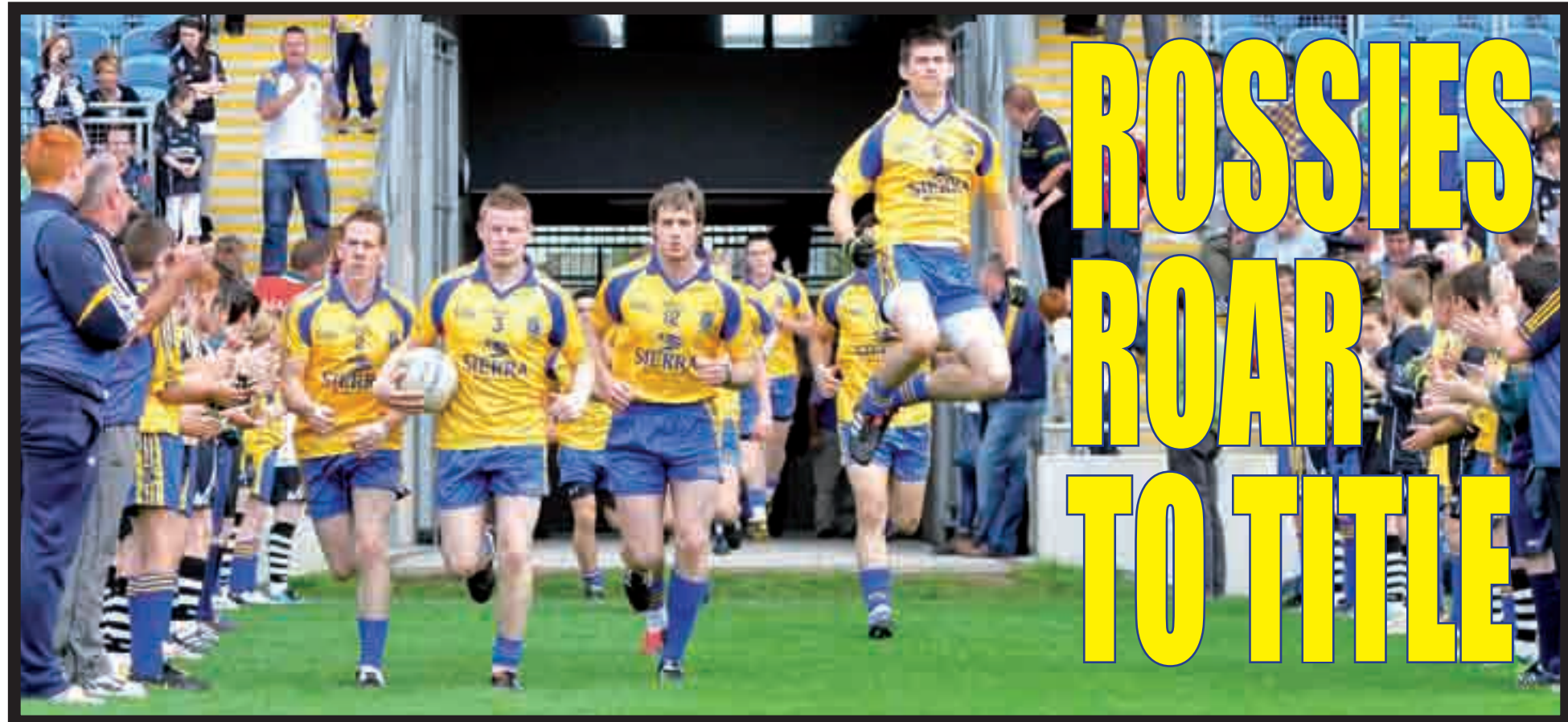


2010 Connacht SFC Final



ROSSIES ROAR TO TITLE

The Roscommon team take to the field at McHale Park, Castlebar. Picture: Andrew Fox.

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In the other corner Stephen Ormsby was arguably man of the match. He tackled, covered and ran his heart out.....his best-ever display in a Roscommon jersey. In the backline David Casey was everywhere. He covered more ground than almost any other Roscommon player as he rampaged all over the field. Seanie Purcell was also playing one of his best games for Roscommon. He marked Mark Breheny and the St Mary's dangerman was held scoreless from play.

At midfield Karol Mannion and Michael Finneran dominated throughout. Michael Finneran in particular had a fantastic game. He fielded great ball and used it so well. The big St Dominics man came of age in this Connacht final.

Karol Mannion was solid throughout and he made a vital catch when the sides were locked at 0-13 apiece which led to the final free and winning score.

David O'Gara was back on the team and had a super first half before he tired late in the game. It is a huge boost to have him back on the team for his hard running and great team-play. Cathal Cregg was also immense, showing the kind of form that all Roscommon supporters knew he is capable of.

Then there is Donie Shine, who has blossomed into a fantastic attacker. Far from being 'only' a free-taker, Donie is now one of the best forwards in the game. Allied to his superb frees, he is able to kick scores from play with both feet and he is certainly Roscommon's talisman now.

The subs played their part too. Kevin Higgins ran like his life depended on it and Johnny Dunning earned the vital free that won the game in the 67th minute. Every other player played their part too and the fact that Sligo's centre half-back, two midfielders and centre half-forward were all taken off, indicates just how effective Roscommon's play around the centre was throughout the game.

Roscommon laid the foundation for their win in the first half. They hunted in packs and dominated midfield. Alan Costello (Sligo's best player) opened the scoring within 25 seconds but Ros-

common shot three points in a row by the 8th minute through two Done Shine placed balls (one a 45) and a great point from the rampaging David Casey.

Costello kicked another super point in the 12th minute from 40 metres before Roscommon forged ahead again with points from Donie Shine (a brilliant effort from 30 metres out on the

sideline) and Cathal Cregg to leave the score 0-5 to 0-2 after 15 minutes.

A Mark Breheny free was cancelled out by a well-taken point from David Keenan before Donie Shine stretched the Roscommon lead to three with a point from play from 20 metres in the 20th minute.

The atmosphere was electric as the teams slugged it out and there were some fantastic passages of open, attacking football from both sides. Colm McGee kicked a '45 in the 26th minute to narrow the gap for Sligo but three minutes later David O'Gara scored probably the best point of the half when he kicked over left footed after a super solo run.

Donie Shine then kicked two monster frees in the 31st and 33rd minutes to stretch the Roscommon lead to 0-10 to 0-4. But Sligo reduced the margin to four by the half-time whistle when Adrian Marren kicked two points in injury-time (one a free) to leave the half-time score at Roscommon 0-10 Sligo 0-6.

The second half was a thrilling battle. Adrian Marren kicked a super Sligo point in the 40th minute and there were then ten minutes without a score as the tension mounted. Done Shine as next on the scoresheet in the 50th minute when he landed another huge free from 46 metres but a minute later the very impressive Charlie Harrison powered forward to grab an inspirational point for The Yeats County.

Then David Kelly burst through the Roscommon defence only to be denied by Claffey – but ominously Sligo were improving with every passing minute. In the 56th minute Mark Breheny's 20-metre free narrowed the gap to three points. Then, within a minute, Alan Costello kicked two fantastic points from way out in the country – and when Sean Davey kicked a wonder point from all of 70 metres in the 62nd minute, the sides were level at twelve points each.

Sligo appeared to have the momentum, but Roscommon were not to be denied. In the 66th minute Donie Shine kicked another super free after a foul on Cathal Cregg, a score which nudged The Rossies ahead again. In the 67th

minute Sligo were level again when Alan Costello added another brilliant score, this time from 50 metres.

Then as the game entered its final minutes it was Roscommon who came good. Karol Mannion made a crucial catch and in the subsequent attack Johnny Dunning was fouled, giving the peerless Shine his chance to give Roscommon the lead. He duly obliged.

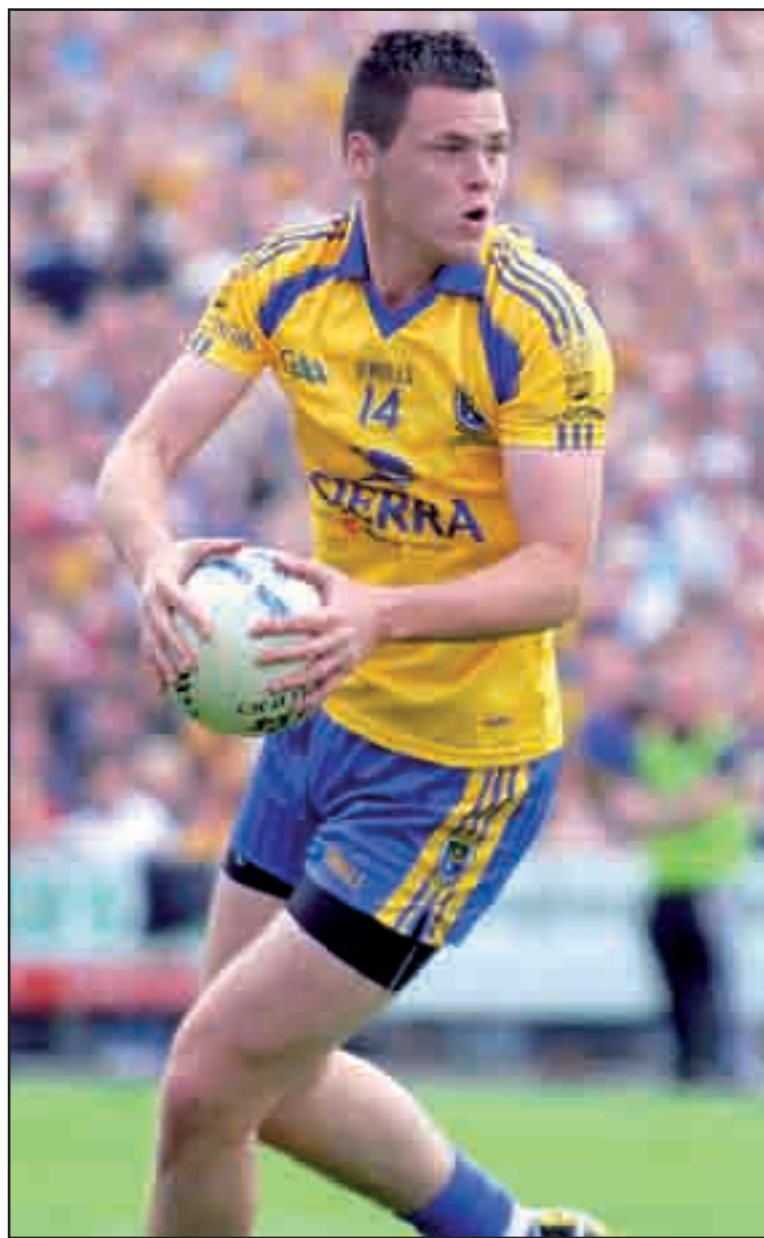
Referee Jimmy White played one minute and fifty seconds of the two he had indicated he was allowing for injury-time, and the final whistle was greeted with wild Roscommon celebrations as thousands of Rossies flooded on to the field to acclaim their heroes. As I watched the Nestor Cup being presented to Peter Domican I swear that I could see the mighty man from Gortaganny smiling down on The Rossies as they prepared to head home after a mighty game of championship football.

Connacht final line-outs

Roscommon: Geoffrey Claffey; Seanie McDermott, Peter Domican, Stephen Ormsby; Cathal Dineen, Seanie Purcell, David Casey (0-1); Michael Finneran, Karol Mannion; David Keenan (0-1), David O'Gara (0-1), Cathal Cregg (0-1); John Rogers, Donie Shine (0-10, 7 frees), Ger Heneghan. Subs: Kevin Higgins for Rogers, Colm Garvey for Casey, Jonathan Dunning for O'Gara, Garvey for Dineen.

Sligo: Philip Greene; Charlie Harrison (capt., 0-1), Noel McGuire, Ross Donovan; Keelan Cawley, Brendan Phillips, Johnny Davey; Tony Taylor, Stephen Gilmartin; Alan Costello (0-5), Mark Breheny (0-2, both frees), Eamon O'Hara; Colm McGee (0-1, free), Adrian Marren (0-3, 1 free), David Kelly. Subs: Eugene Mullen for Taylor, Kenneth Sweeney for McGee, Sean Davey (0-1) for Gilmartin, Neil Ewing for Phillips, Stephen Coen for Breheny.

Referee: Jimmy White (Donegal).



Man of the Match Donie Shine. Picture: Andrew Fox.