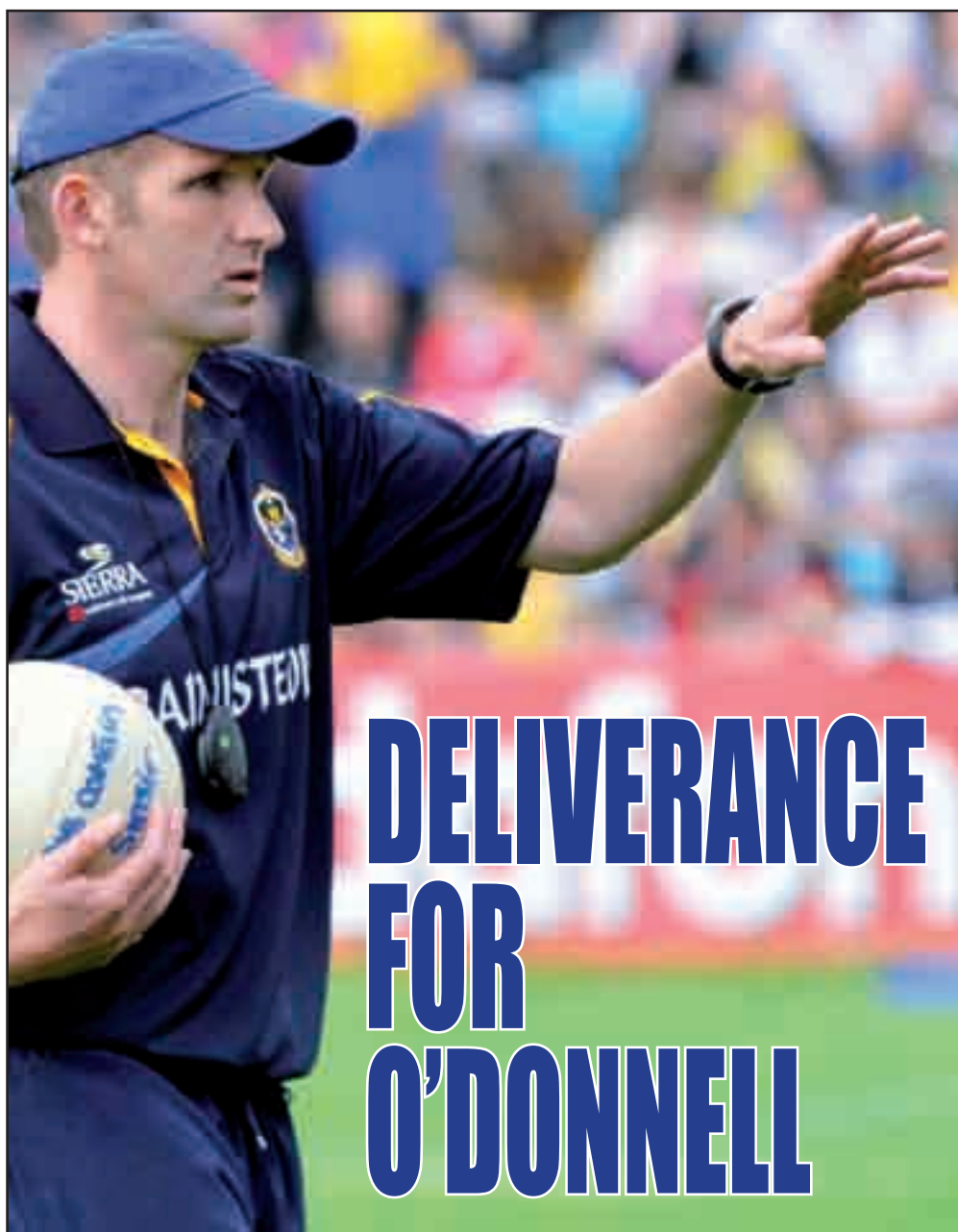


2010 Connacht SFC Final



DELIVERANCE FOR O'DONNELL

the final whistle

WHAT THEY SAID



■ Seamus Duke

I'm delighted for the players'

Fergal O'Donnell (Roscommon manager)

Roscommon manager Fergal O'Donnell spoke to Roscommon People Sports Editor Seamus Duke moments after the final whistle.

"It's a great win, especially coming from where we were. It has been a very difficult year up to today. The league was very hard. We were well beaten by Cavan and Sligo, so that was difficult.

"But after the Wexford game in the league we knew that we had about 12 weeks to get ready if we were going to get to the Connacht final. We trained really hard for the few weeks after the Wexford game.

"We played a few low-key challenge games at the start of May against Clare and Longford and we won those games and that started to build confidence. Then we played Tipperary and Limerick and we were improving all the time. Then we beat London and Leitrim and it was a slow progression, but we were getting there.

"I'm so delighted for the players, especially the older guys who have been playing for Roscommon for a long time. A lot of the younger lads have won minor and junior and U21 titles but some of the older lads on the panel have never won anything.

"Lads like Karol Mannion, Johnny Dunning, Seanie Mac (McDermott), Ger Heneghan and all the others were excellent. The whole team worked so hard, even the subs, and that was very pleasing there today.

"When Sligo came back at us in the second half it looked like they would win or at least

get a draw...and I didn't want a replay. This was our day. It was set up nicely for us here today. We came in under the radar and today was the day.

"I have learned with the few successes that I have had playing for Roscommon that when you get a chance to win you have to take it. We don't care if we are the Wimbledon of Connacht football. We won the title out there today and that's all that matters.

"There were a few mistakes creeping into our game in the second half but the lads stuck to the game-plan brilliantly. I couldn't have asked any more. Sean Purcell had a super game there today. He did a great marking job on Mark Breheny. I was thrilled for him too.

"We were written off by the national media. I read in one paper last week where they called Donie Shine 'Donie Shannon'! It was annoying that we received such poor coverage but we don't care this evening. I am so delighted. It's a great win."

Walsh graceful in defeat

Kevin Walsh (Sligo manager)

"We are very disappointed, but fair play to Roscommon, they showed huge hunger out there and it took us a long time to get going. We were disappointed with the middle third of the field. We needed more possession, but in fairness to Roscommon they denied us.

"I was proud of the Sligo players. They kept coming back and we thought that when we levelled it we could go on and win it but they kept going too.

"I was surprised that the referee did not add on more time at the finish there. I would have said that there should have been at least four minutes' injury-time, but that's the way it goes.

"We still have a chance to be playing in the All-Ireland quarter-final in Croke Park so we will have to prepare for that now. Well done to Roscommon – it was a great win for them here today."

'Savage' belief in the Roscommon dressing room

"We went out so determined there today and we gave it everything. It was brilliant that it worked out so well. I'm thrilled that we won it. All the hard work has paid off" – **Michael Finneran**

"Even though Sligo came to level it towards the finish, I always thought that we could go on and win it. There was a savage belief in our dressing room there today and we were determined to win that match. I cannot explain what it was but I just couldn't see us losing that game today" – **Michael Finneran**

"Outstanding, I'm absolutely delighted. I always knew there was a big game in this team and we showed it today. Sligo came in here as the hot favourites and we weren't rated really but we showed that we are a good side today" – **Seanie McDermott**

"We knew that the match would go down to the wire. We had a strong breeze in the first half and we took advantage of it and Sligo didn't do as well when they had the breeze, and that was the difference" – **Seanie McDermott**

"When we saw the draw we knew that if we went about it the right

way we would be in the Connacht final and it was all about working hard and putting it together. It's great to have a Connacht medal" – **Seanie McDermott**

"We are so delighted. We had a huge belief among the panel. It was great to go out and play so well as a team" – **Donie Shine**

"We got off to a flier and got the early points which were crucial and thankfully we were able to hang on in the second half" – **Donie Shine**

"This means absolutely everything to us. We had a bad start to the year but things improved as the year went on. It's a brilliant feeling" – **Donie Shine**

"I came into the panel in the winter of 2001 after Roscommon won the Connacht title and I thought I was going to be winning titles regularly. There have been some very bad times since. But you have to keep going and have the belief that some day things will change – and that's what happened" – **Karol Mannion**

"We knew that it was a close, tense affair. When Sligo pulled back to level the scores we knew that it



Roscommon team members celebrate with the Nestor Cup. Picture: Andrew Fox.

was going to be tight, but we never panicked. I was glad to make that catch when the scores were 13 points apiece and it was great that we got a free afterwards to win it" – **Karol Mannion**

"I have been with this team for a

number of years and I can honestly say that we have worked so hard since Fergal O'Donnell came in. We are so united as a panel of players and it's great that everything came good for us today" – **Geoffrey Claffey**

"It was nice to be able to make the save (from David Kelly). There are plenty of times that the ball would go by you in that situation so it was nice to be able to contribute to the win today. It's a mighty day for us and for Roscommon" – **Geoffrey Claffey**