

Connacht SFC Quarter-final

# No fairytale for New York against Leitrim

Westerners kick last four points of the game in extra time to eke out victory

**New York 1-15**  
**Leitrim 0-19**  
(After extra-time)

**CHRIS CLARKE**  
in Gaelic Park, New York

It was nearly the fairytale of New York but a last-gasp charge by a determined Leitrim side downed a heroic display by New York. Noel Plunkett, in the dying seconds of the second half of extra time, sliced right through the New York backline before putting over the decisive point.

It was the lowest of moments for the home side and their supporters as Gaelic Park was abuzz from well before the opening throw in. Many a person through the gates had the same thing on their mind - this is New York's best chance ever.

Keith Beirne got Leitrim on the board first with an opening minute score, but that would be all for Brendan Guckian's men for quite a while. If Gaelic Park had a roof over its head it would've erupted a minute later when the hometown kid Shane Hogan dispatched a goal.

**Neatly done**

Former Armagh intercounty star Jamie Clarke gathered the ball to the right of the posts before passing off to the Bronx born and raised Hogan who neatly slipped the ball past keeper Diarmuid McKiernan.

Two minutes later New

York's other midfielder David Culhane put the home side up 1-1 to 0-1. By the fifth minute, New York were really causing a bit of bother to the Leitrim backs as they had no answer for the darting north/south runs of Kevin O'Grady, Tony Donnelly, Jamie Clarke and the rest of the New York forwards.

Clarke would score his first point of the match in the fifth minute before adding a second five minutes later after O'Grady put over his first in the eighth minute. By the 12th minute, Leitrim had done well to push back but a half chance at goal was superbly blocked down by New York captain Tom Cunniffe.

**Settle down**

At 1-4 to 0-1 Leitrim needed a level head to settle things down and ironically it came in the form of Emlyn Mulligan, who less than six months ago was helping Donegal NYC to a New York Senior Championship. Mulligan gathered the ball just past midfield and superbly sent over Leitrim's second point of the match.

Knowing he needed to somehow take back the midfield, Brendan Guckian inserted Dean McGovern into the game - replacing Dohmhall Flynn. McGovern made an immediate impact - plucking the first ball that came his way out of the air.

Gradually Leitrim worked their way back into the game, and by half time they had managed to take the lead, 0-9 to 1-5.

The game in the second half continued at a furious pace, and



**New York's Jamie Clarke with Paddy Maguire of Leitrim in Gaelic Park last night.**  
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY MARLIN/INPHO

the gap between the teams never went to more than two points. Extra time appeared inevitable. New York might have made history with a late score from Clarke, but his effort dropped short and we were all set for extra time.

Leitrim were on top in the first additional period but were wasteful, kicking four wides while New York kicked two points, through Clarke and O'Grady.

They stretched their lead to three in the second period of extra time but from there Leitrim clawed their way back into the game, kicking the last four points of the match before Plunkett delivered the late last-gasp winner.

"Absolutely gutted," said former player Pat Donohue on RTE Sport. "If there was ever a

day that New York were going to take it and go to the championship, today was that day."

**LEITRIM:** D McKiernan, P Maguire, M McWeeney, O Madden, J Rooney, D Wynn, S Quinn (0-2); M Plunkett (0-1), D Flynn (0-1), J Heslin, E Mulligan (0-3), R O'Rourke (0-2); D Rooney (0-1), K Beirne (0-7, 3 frees), I Gallagher. Subs: D McGovern (0-1) for Flynn (21 mins), R Kennedy for Heslin (52 mins), C Gaffney for Rooney (58 mins), N Plunkett (0-1) for Wynn (71 mins), D Rooney for Beirne (81 mins).  
**NEW YORK:** V Cadden, N Collins (0-1), D Ward, M Cregan, E Williams, T Cunniffe, M Queenan, D Culhane (0-1), S Hogan (1-0), T Donnelly (0-3, 2 frees), J Clarke (0-5, 2 frees), L Kelly (0-1); K O'Grady (0-3), D McDonagh, D Freeman. Subs: D McKenna (0-1) for Freeman (33 mins), J Collins for Kelly (47), P Boyle for Queenan (52 mins), A Cunningham for Donnelly (55 mins), K Scally for Collins (61 mins), J J Matthews for Cunningham (63, 68 mins), L Kelly for Culhane (81 mins), T Donnelly for Matthews (85 mins).  
Referee: D O'Mahoney (Tipperary).

News

## Gormley thankful as defibrillator saves father's life

FRANCIS MOONEY

Former Tyrone star Conor Gormley has called on all sports clubs to ensure a defibrillator is installed at their ground, after his father's life was saved during a match at the weekend.

Sean Gormley suffered a heart seizure while watching Carrickmore's Division One league game at Ardboe on Friday evening.

He was immediately attended to by local medical personnel who used the Ardboe club's defibrillator.

Conor, who was playing in the game, was among those who rushed to his father's aid. Following emergency treatment at the scene, Gormley was taken by ambulance to Craigavon Area Hospital, where he was recovering on Sunday night.

"If the defibrillator hadn't been there, it might have been a totally different story. It shows the importance of it, and having it ready and available at every club. You just never know when it's going to be called upon," said Conor.

"Thankfully it was there on Friday night, and it made a big difference for us as a family and as a club."

The three-time All-Ireland winner paid tribute to members of the Ardboe club, whose prompt reaction made all the difference.

"As a family, we're really appreciative of Ardboe, for their swift actions to bring out the defibrillator, and they did great work, along with one of our own club members. Without all that sort of swift action

and swift thinking, we could have been dealing with a different story.

"There were three or four girls from Ardboe, and they were exceptional in the work that they did, and a big massive thank you to them.

"He's recovering well and doing well, and a big thanks to the staff up there as well, and the ambulance staff, who were on the scene as well, for their swift action, and keeping everybody calm and cool, because it wasn't easy dealing with it."

"Earlier that day he was out golfing with a few friends, and if it had happened on the golf course, it may not have been such a positive outcome..."

**The legacy**

The incident at Ardboe reflected the legacy of a dear friend and former Tyrone team-mate of Conor Gormley's, Cormac McAnallen's sudden death, at the age of 24, in March 2004, prompted the establishment of the Cormac Trust, which has as one of its main objectives the installation of heart defibrillators in all sports clubs.

"We're grateful to the Cormac Trust, and the way they have driven that issue with the defibrillators.

"It's up to people within the clubs, all clubs, not just the GAA, to check their defibrillators, make sure they're in working order, serviced regularly and easy at hand to get to, easily accessed so that they can be used swiftly."

The Carrickmore club also expressed their gratitude to the host club in coming to the assistance of Seán Gormley.

Gaelic Football

## Championship 2018 Power rankings



**Eamon Donoghue**

How will your county fare this summer? League and championship performances over the last three years might shed some light on their prospects

This year's All-Ireland football championship will mark the beginning of the Super 8s. The All-Ireland quarter-finals will be replaced by a round robin format, with the top two teams to emerge from two groups of four making up the semi-finals. It's going to be great for those who make it. For those who don't, the gap between the haves and have nots will continue to grow. To figure out who are best placed to make the cut, we've worked out the current football power rankings...

**1 Dublin**

No surprises here. Dublin have won two of the last three league titles - losing last year's final to Kerry - to go along with three successive All-Ireland and Leinster championships. They are without doubt the best team in the country and will certainly be one of the last eight teams. They aim to be the best first team since Kerry in 1981 to win four in a row and only the fourth team to ever do so.

**2 Kerry**

This was always going to come down to Kerry and Mayo. The Kingdom are the third ranked team in the land on championship form, but they are the second best in the league - helped largely by their win over Dublin last year. With a sprinkling of talented youngsters adding to their mix this year, they will be quietly confident of matching Dublin.

**3 Mayo**

Mayo have lost the last two All-Ireland finals making them the country's second best championship team. What drags them down in pecking is their league form. They are only the fifth best league team, finishing sixth, and fifth on two occasions. Their aim in recent years, however, has been to survive in Division One before peaking further down the line.

**4 Tyrone**

Another who have their championship form largely to thank for this ranking with two Ulster titles and two All-Ireland semi-final appearances in the last three years while they are the sixth best league team. They flattered to deceive last summer and it's hard to see where any major improvement will come from this summer.

**5 Donegal**

Donegal make it into fifth place largely because of their consistency - they are the fourth best in the league and the rank sixth in the championship. The post-Jim McGuinness era hasn't been overly exciting but they've had third and fourth place league finishes and made two championship quarter-finals.

**6 Monaghan**

Perhaps surprisingly, Monaghan are the third best league team. They've failed to deliver on early promise year-on-year in the championship but nevertheless have appeared in two quarter-finals and secured an Ulster title in 2015. They'll expect to make the Super 8s and the new format could bring them more joy than the previous system.

**7 Galway**

The Tribesmen reached the league final this year but were in Division Two the previous two resulting in an eighth placed ranking. Their Championship form - a Connacht title and two quarter-final appearances - help lift them up the standings. Expectation is building



out west, but a first semi-final appearance since 2001 would be a realistic target.

**8 Roscommon**

The third Connacht team in the top eight, Roscommon have a Division Two league title and a third placed finish in the top flight to thank for making them the seventh best league team. One quarter-final appearance and a Connacht title make them the eighth best championship county. After another kind draw their target will be to retain their Connacht title, and make the Super 8s.

**9 Cork**

This may come as a bit of a surprise but Cork are likely to be knocking on the Super 8 door, although maybe not quite getting in. The Rebels have reached round four of the qualifiers for three years running and are the 10th best league and ninth best championship team. But they'll do well this year to stop Tipp and Clare from closing in on them.

**10 Kildare**

One quarter-final and one round four qualifier appearance make them the country's 10th ranked championship team. Relegated from Division One this year, they are the 11th best league team. They are one of only two Leinster teams in the top 15 - which says it all about the strength, or lack thereof, in the province.

**11 Tipperary**

Tipperary are the 11th best championship team, driven largely by their semi-final appearance in 2016, but are only 16th in the league rankings. They will have the likes of Steven O'Brien back involved this year and were unfortunate not to be promoted from Division Two, but they'll need to be more clinical if they want a place in the top eight.

**12 Clare**

Another who largely have their 2016 championship run to thank for their overall position in these rankings. Clare reached the quarter-finals that year and are the 12th best in the land over the past three seasons. They've shown this year they are well able to mix it in Division Two, and Clare are ranked 14th on league form. The Super 8s will be a stretch but a target nonetheless.

**13 Derry**

Ahead of some of their fellow Ulster counties - who might harbour realistic ambitions of beating them this summer - Derry are the 14th ranked championship team, while they stand 18th ranked league team. Slaughter's success shows the talent is still there, but Derry's recent demise is reflected in that they will operate in Division Four in 2019.

**14 Armagh**

Armagh gained promotion into Division Two this year, and they are the 17th ranked league side. They are the 16th ranked championship team with one quarter-final offset by two early exits. They will be competing with the likes of Tipperary and Kildare for a place in the Super 8s and beat both of them last summer.

**15 Cavan**

Cavan's Super 8 aspirations will require a significant improvement in their championship form. They are the 20th ranked championship county although a sting in the top flight coupled with promotion from Division Two this year elevates them to ninth in the league standings. Early championship exits means they are the only team with Division One status for next season not in the top eight in these rankings.

**16 Westmeath**

Slightly edging their near neighbours, Westmeath are only the 24th ranked league county. Yet they are the 13th ranked championship county after reaching round four of the qualifiers twice. They avoid the Dubs until a potential meeting in the Leinster final, and will be hoping to make it to the provincial decider for the third year in four.

**17 Meath**

They've not gone further than round three of the qualifiers and are the 19th ranked championship team while they are the 12th best league team and are a consolidated Division Two outfit. But for such a proud football county, Meath are falling well short of expectations. A number of players opting out reflects a lack of belief in mounting a serious challenge to Dublin in Leinster.

**18 Sligo**

Their league form kills them in this list - they are 21st based on the last three campaigns - while they're the 15th in the championship and always game for an upset, whether it be in Connacht or the qualifiers. Galway or Mayo cannot afford to take them for granted in a Connacht semi-final, but with

a tight panel they need everyone at full fitness.

**19 Fermanagh**

An improved league campaign leaves them 15th in these rankings. They'll be in Division Two next year and they appear refreshed under Rory Gallagher. They are the 18th best team on championship form, but with a good run of things in the qualifiers they could repeat their 2015 feat and sneak into the last eight.

**20 Longford**

Inconsistency means they are the 17th ranked championship county and the 20th league team, although they are a young team and certainly on the up. No disgrace in exiting the championship to Donegal, Cork and Kildare in the last three years, and they've beaten Down, Monaghan and Clare along the way.

**21 Down**

A spell in Division One of the league in 2016 leaves Down as the 13th ranked league team. Last year's beaten Ulster finalists are, however, the 21st ranked championship team. There was promise in last year's run, playing beautiful football in the process. In the two previous years they exited in the first round of the qualifiers to Wexford and Longford.

**22 Laois**

Some expectation is building again in the county after a successful league showing, albeit in Division Four. They are ranked 23rd in the football and 23rd in the championship. With the likes of Colm Begley, John O'Loughlin they have quality players but have individually and collectively been way off the pace in recent years.

**23 Carlow**

The 22nd best team in the championship after last year's qualifier run while they are down in 27th in the league rankings. Brendan Murphy's departure suggests they see improving in the league - finally getting out of Division Four was a real boost to the county - as more beneficial than another run in the qualifiers.

**24 Offaly**

Offaly languish in 22nd ranked in the league and the 26th ranked championship county after some barren years. They no longer have Niall McNamee to get them out of tight spots but have shown in the last two years with some last-ditch relegation rescue missions that a spark is still there.

**25 Wexford**

Ranked 26th ranked in the league, their championship form has been just as disappointing and they stand 25th in that regard. They've beaten Limerick and Down and brought Kildare to within a point, but that's as good as it's got these past few summers. Division Four in the league next year as well.

**26 Leitrim**

Another underwhelming Division Four campaign in which they lost their opening three games, gave London a walkover and saw their game against Waterford cancelled altogether. They haven't fared much better in the championship over the past three years, with wins over London and Waterford nothing to shout about.

**27 Louth**

They may be 19th in the league rankings but their championship form has been dismal where they are right down in 29th. Their only championship win in the past three years was actually against Leitrim, and Pete McGrath's first league campaign has hardly increased optimism.

**28 Antrim**

A win over Laois in 2015 keeps them marginally above the bottom three. Antrim are the 25th side on league form and the 28th on championship. While they are on the easier side of the Ulster draw this year, Down will be rubbing their hands ahead of the quarter-final clash.

**29 Limerick**

Another with just the one championship win to their name over three summers and only once did they taste success in Division Four this year. The 28th league side in the country, in championship terms they are 27th. Limerick football is not in a good place.

**30 Wicklow**

In all there are eight Leinster counties in the bottom half of this list, which is indicative of the problems in the province. Wicklow are third from bottom of the overall rankings, just ahead of London but their last championship win came in 2014, beating Offaly before exiting in round two of the qualifiers.

**31 London**

London have failed to build on their 2013 Connacht final appearance and only technicalities separate the bottom few teams here. London exited in round four of the qualifiers in 2013, whereas Waterford have not won a single game since 2011.

**32 Waterford**

Rock bottom. Three round one qualifier exits in a row and rooted in Division Four. They actually have a slightly better league ranking than London and Wicklow, however if there was a Division Five they'd have been heading for it after just one win and one draw so far this year. They've not beaten Tipperary in the championship since 1988.

Methodology

The teams have been ranked in order of their average league position over the last three campaigns. In terms of the championship, we have used a weighting system for the round the team exits in from winner, runner-up, semi-final exit, quarter-final exit, round 4 exit, round 3 exit, round 2 exit, round 1 exit. There is also a bonus weighting for winning a provincial title. The league and championship rankings are combined with a double weighting for championship performance.