

Gaelic Games Donegal

McGuinness responds to Gallagher in book row

Donegal man defends accuracy of memoir following his successor's comments
Gallagher had questioned the way his departure from backroom was portrayed

SEÁN MORAN

Former Donegal manager Jim McGuinness has taken issue with the statement by his successor and former All-Ireland-winning selector Rory Gallagher that there were inaccuracies in McGuinness's book, *Until Victory Always*, and questioning its account of the management team's departure in 2013, maintaining that he was "comfortable in the knowledge that Donegal County Board officers are aware of the true circumstances of my departure".

Speaking to Matt Cooper on Monday evening's *Last Word* programme on Today FM, McGuinness referred to Gallagher's comments, released on Sunday night.

"I'm very comfortable with the book. The facts of the matter are in the book. In terms of the people in the book, we've been very, very fair. I didn't want the book to be a tabloid; I didn't want it to something that was controversial – something that was going to drag the tone down. In my opinion, it's a very honest account and it's a very true reflection of myself as a person and also of the team."

"It's very disappointing. Rory makes reference to his departure yesterday in a statement. All I can say to that is, in terms of the protocol around

that, I would consider it gold standard, absolutely gold standard. Every single thing was 100 per cent done correctly."

"I spoke with the county chairman; I spoke with Rory; I spoke with Maxi [Curran]; I spoke with Francie [Friel]. I let them all go. I spoke with Pat Shovelin, the other member of the management team and informed him as the players' representative and captain, and then I re-rang the chairman of the county board to say that everything had been complete."

Ambiguity

"Where the ambiguity is there, I don't understand, and I don't know where that's coming from. The book is the book and I'm happy with the book."

Gallagher's statement further stated: "I have received many requests for my reaction to the description given by Jim McGuinness in his book with regard to my departure from the Donegal senior management team in September 2013."

"At this point, I am not interested in commenting on the inaccuracies in the book while involved with the Donegal senior team."

"I will say I am disappointed Jim has chosen to comment on the break-up of the manage-



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ment team at this point. "The players, management and backroom team had a very clear understanding that what happened within the group remained within the group."

Circumstances

County chair Seán Dunion was asked by *The Irish Times* whether the county board officers agreed with the statement that they knew "the true circumstances" of the selectors' departure in 2013.

lagger is the current manager. There is believed to have been misgiving amongst some in the county about the wisdom of making a public statement on the book in the middle of McGuinness's public appearances to promote it.

Although he was county chair at the time, he wasn't prepared to discuss the matter, particularly with the likelihood that it would be raised at Monday night's county committee meeting.

"That's Rory's statement and I'm not willing to comment on it. I'm not going there between Jim and Rory. I've nothing to add."

New Tipperary manager Michael Ryan is expected to unveil former team-mate John Madden as a member of his Tipperary senior hurling backroom team at a county board meeting this evening. Ryan will put forward his management team for ratification and Madden is the latest named to be linked with a key role.

The Lorrha-Dorrha clubman, who managed North outfit Silvermines this year, won All-Ireland senior hurling medals in 1989 and 1991.

All-Ireland medallist from 2010 Declan Fanning is also on board, potentially as coach, in Ryan's new regime but it is understood that former Kildare

and Wexford senior football manager Jason Ryan will not be involved.

Liam Kearns will be formally ratified as Tipperary's new senior football manager after he received the green light from the football board last night.

Former Donegal manager Jim McGuinness celebrates victory over Tyrone in 2013 with his selector Rory Gallagher. PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES CROMBIE/INPHO

Ulster Club SFC

McCann 'shocked' by alleged biting incident during defeat to Crossmaglen

Cargin manager highlighted assault after midfielder had a bite mark on his neck

Cargin centrefielder Michael McCann has insisted he was bitten by a Crossmaglen player during Sunday's Ulster club SFC quarter-final. The former Antrim footballer said on Monday night that he had been left "shocked" by the incident which is alleged to have occurred during his club's 2-15 to 0-13 defeat by the six-time All-Ireland winners.

The Antrim champions' manager John Brennan highlighted the incident immediately after the match in Armagh's Athletic Grounds, revealing his player had a mark on his neck due to a bite.

McCann has now backed up his manager's claims and says the incident is what sparked the brawl which involved up to a dozen players in the 36th minute.

"It did happen," he said. "I was shocked by it because it has never happened me in my career before, but I knew imme-

diately what it was. I reported it straight away to the referee and it's in his hands now."

"Congratulations to Crossmaglen on their victory and that's really all I want to say about it."

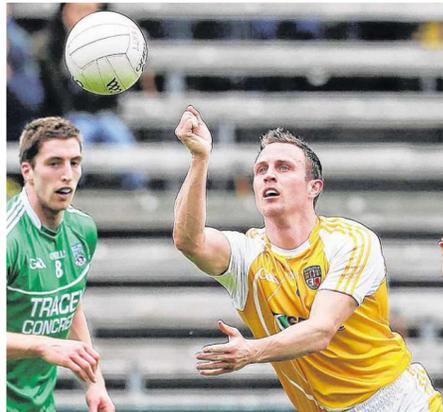
Crossmaglen have strongly contested Cargin's claims with joint-manager Oisín McConville insisting his players have rubbished the allegation.

Own investigation

"We have asked our players was anybody involved in a biting incident and they have said categorically 'no,'" he said.

"That is good enough for us. We take the allegation seriously, but we have conducted our own investigation on it and are satisfied with it."

The contents of referee Joe McQuillan's report will now be crucial in determining whether the Ulster Council proceed with an investigation. The fact that McCann informed the ref-



Michael McCann: insists he was bitten in the game against Crossmaglen. PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN PORTER/NPHO/PRESSEYE

“I was shocked by it because it has never happened me in my career before”

eree of an incident during the game, suggests it will be referred in McQuillan's report.

Ulster Council CEO Danny Murphy said that the length of time the matter will take will depend on the referee's report.

"If it's a simple, straightforward report it will be dealt with very quickly. If it's not it'll then have to go to a committee and we may end up having to hold an inquiry into it. That will obviously affect how long it's going to take."

McConville says the club are

happy to co-operate with any potential investigation.

"We won't be privy to the referee's report for a while and usually we don't bother getting it unless somebody is sent off or we need to take a look at something," said McConville.

"If something is mentioned in the referee's report, I'm sure we will be informed."

"We don't know what's in the referee's report because we don't know if something was reported to him. It's not what we need right now, but if an investigation happens we are happy to co-operate."

"Anything that the Ulster Council wants to do, we will facilitate that."

"At the moment, all our focus is on an Ulster semi-final. We have to prepare for Kilcoo and we have a big two weeks ahead. It's important to use the time wisely."

News

Time for Durcan to put career before football

SEÁN MORAN

Donegal's All Star goalkeeper Paul Durcan has given the clearest indication that his inter-county career may be over for the foreseeable future. He was speaking after the Dublin football final in which he played for Ballyboden who shocked county and provincial champions St Vincent's.

Durcan, who has moved to Qatar where his wife has taken up a new post, was asked was there a possibility that he mightn't be back.

"Ah yeah, listen; I'm 14 years nearly with Donegal," he said. "It's time to make a bit of money as the man says. It's not paying the bills, unfortunately, so we'll see what happens next year. I'll be chatting to Rory next year and I'll see what the crack is in the new year."

Now 31 and a quantity surveyor, Durcan has played 51 championship matches for Donegal since making his senior debut in 2004 against Antrim. He won a county medal with his home club Four Masters in 2003 but switched to Ballyboden for the past season, as he was based in Dublin and his cousin Robbie McDaid plays for the club.

He confirmed that he was

unlikely to be able to play a significant role in Ballyboden's provincial campaign, which starts this coming weekend.

"I'm living in Qatar now so moving over. Pressure on now! Find a bit of work over there. No, it was a good experience with the boys, in fairness they're a good bunch of lads so it's nice to get another championship before I head out."

He was unable to play in the

semi-final against Clontarf and acknowledged the flexibility shown by Ballyboden manager Andy McEntee.

According to Durcan the Dublin championship was a new experience compared to club football at home.

"It's different, the ball goes in earlier, more kicking from what I'd be used to. It's less defensive as well. The strength, the work the guys do in the gym, it's almost like a county team. It is definitely up there with it. They work as hard. They're a savage bunch."

They're a savage bunch."