

Dublin v Tyrone

All-Ireland SFC Final

# Still no stopping Dublin who now have five in their sights



**Scán Moran**  
at Croke Park

Jim Gavin's side once again showed their ruthless efficiency to see off Tyrone

Dublin	2-17
Tyrone	1-14

History came calling for Dublin in Croke Park yesterday with a fourth successive All-Ireland title, the county's 28th.

Tyrone made their contribution to the final with a blazing first quarter that left Dublin looking shaken and uncertain but the champions recovered with a blitz of 1-3 in three minutes and thereafter the contest ran away from the Ulster men.

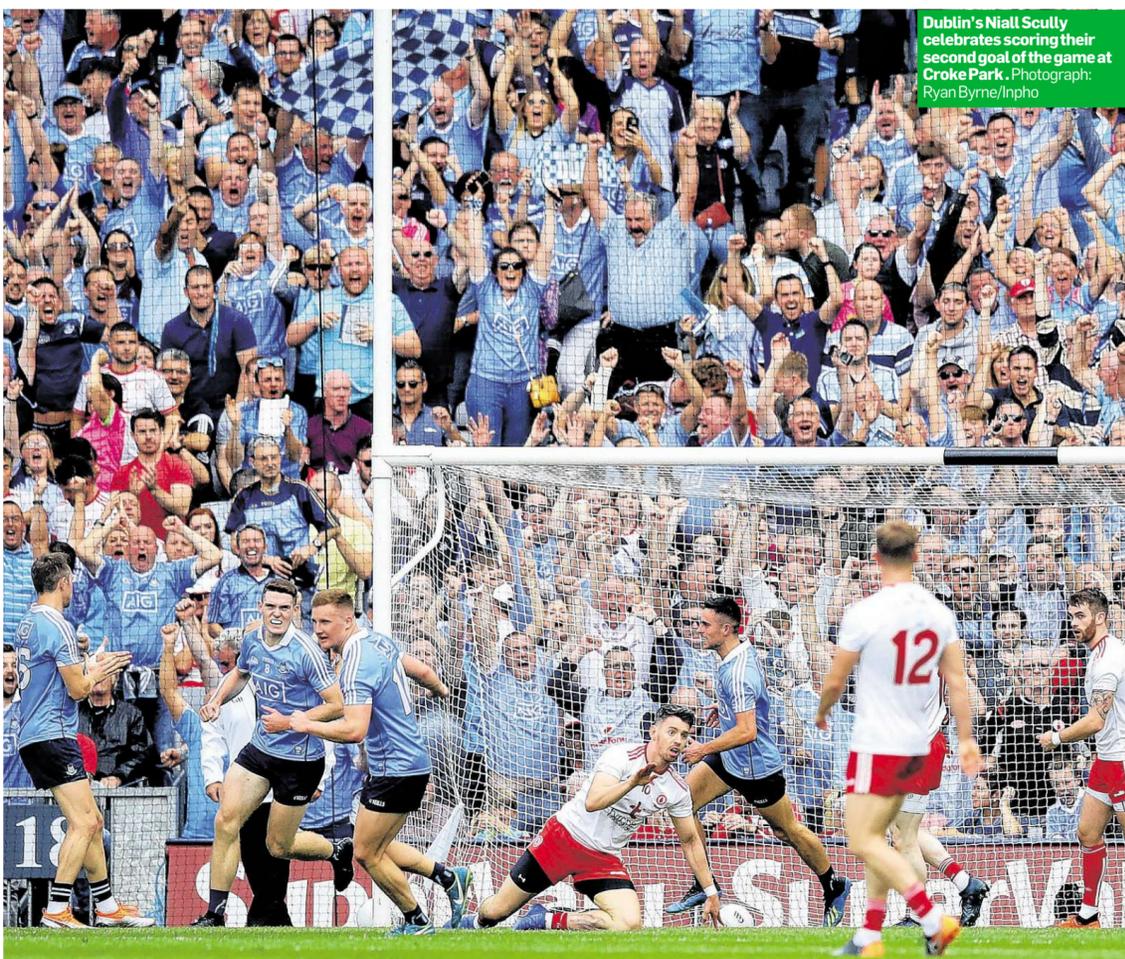
So Dublin join the two Kerry teams of 1929-1932 and 1978-1981 as well as with eerie symmetry their Wexford predecessors of exactly a century ago in 1915-18 as joint holders of the most successful sequence in football. A late penalty, well tucked away by Peter Harte, in the 67th minute – with seven minutes' injury-time left 10 minutes on the clock – was followed by a Lee Brennan free to halve the eight-point deficit but Tyrone were unable to find the composure to put a full press on and in the time remaining, Dublin actually hit three of the last four scores.

So we got to the expected destination by a slightly unexpected route.

Once Dublin had made the necessary corrections they never looked to be under serious pressure. The first adjustment came when Cian O'Sullivan had to be replaced in the 27th minute, his gamble on the hamstring injury picked up against Galway in the semi-final not coming off.

In fact Dublin's defensive co-ordinator had looked in difficulty from the start, not moving with the customary fluency and getting drawn into some man-marking chases that were clearly a strain. In the end Jim Gavin's team got accomplished performances from their top players whereas Tyrone's were ultimately subdued.

A year after his last final was aborted by a cruciate injury, Jack McCaffrey's pace and intelligent defending made a big impact; Brian Fenton emerged as a key influence, in the second half particularly – kicking two languid points, the type where he give the ball just enough money to clear the bar – and commanding the centrefield



Dublin's Niall Scully celebrates scoring their second goal of the game at Croke Park. Photograph: Ryan Byrne/Inpho

area.

Con O'Callaghan didn't replicate his wonder goals from last year's semi-final and final but he was energetic and excellent in his use of the ball, posing a constant threat. Overall though, Ciarán Kilkenny ran the show for Dublin. Starting on the inside line he – like the rest of the team – took his time to get into the contest but once there he took over.

**Conduct** Curiously he had never previously scored in a senior All-Ireland final but he ended his fifth as Dublin's joint-top scorer from play, with three points. He also seized the baton to conduct the attack, at one stage amusingly appearing to punish Philly McMahon for a loose attempt at a shot when other options were available by not passing him the ball, rather like a librarian refusing a loan to someone who had previously damaged a book.

From Tyrone's perspective their main influencers were well restrained after the encouraging start. John Small kept Harte scoreless from play and in a further echo of the counties' quarter-final meeting in Omagh, Eoin Murchan did the

same on Niall Sludden.

They had their successes in that Pádraig Hampsey did well on Mannion, who scored just one from play – to go with another of his file of defensive interventions against Tyrone when he materialised in front of his own goal in the 25th minute to clear a ball initially blocked by the excellent Jonny Cooper.

All of this had appeared a distance away in the opening quarter. Dublin started poorly with Dean Rock missing two early frees after opening the scoring in the third minute and McCaffrey disappointingly spoiling a fine run by tamely under-hitting his shot.

Tyrone steadied and began to put together lively, energetic attacks. Harte equalised with a free and, after Stephen Cluxton's kick-out was burgled, Mark Bradley put them ahead. Tiernan McCann, at this stage doing a decent job on Kilkenny, kicked a third and Connor McAleisley added the fourth and fifth from a free and play and at 0-1 to 0-5, in the 16th minute, the champions were reeling.

Obviously Dublin's revival overturned the early advantage but Tyrone also should have taken more from their ascendancy. Their shot selection wasn't

**By the numbers**

	Dublin	Tyrone
First half	2-7	0-6
Second half	0-10	1-8
Wides	6	16
From play	1-13	0-9
Frees conceded	21	20
Yellow cards	3	2
Red cards	1	0
Black cards	0	1
Attendance	82,300	

good and the vision to release a better-placed team-mate not always in evidence.

The Dublin comeback started with an ambitious kick-out by Cluxton – whose two wobbles in the eighth and ninth minute proved the only restarts he lost out of 31 – which just about reached McCaffrey on a run that torpedoed in on goal and culminated in Kilkenny's point.

Tyrone goalkeeper Niall Morgan had been accurate enough up until then but Kilkenny picked off the restart and the move ended in a penalty when Paul Mannion was deemed to have been brought down in a borderline but justifiable call and Mannion himself delivered a textbook conversion high to

Morgan's left.

Another two points followed in deadly staccato from Dean Rock, atoning for his dead-ball woes with sharp finishing in play. It was now 1-4 to 0-5 and Tyrone never even regained parity. The next hammer blow came when O'Callaghan ingeniously opened up a passage on goal, was fouled but got the ball away for Niall Scully to palm into the net.

**Reversal of fortune**

Tyrone were stunned by the reversal in fortune and trailed by seven at the break, 2-7 to 0-6.

In the second half they tried a few things, going man-to-man and late on, shifting Colm Cavanagh – lucky not to get black-carded for a first-half foul on O'Callaghan – into full forward. They then promptly forgot about him until a long ball led to the late penalty after he was fouled by McMahon, just as had happened in injury-time in last year's semi-final except, on that occasion, Cluxton saved.

Dublin simply kept them at arm's length, clipping scores periodically and never looking likely to concede a goal until the late penalty. Kieran McGeary received a black card in the 47th minute and Dublin's John

Small saw red in injury-time for a second yellow but it wasn't a particularly fractious match.

The champions never looked liable to cracking in the fraught closing minutes with points from replacements Kevin McManamon and Michael Darragh Macauley keeping them on course for a six-point win, their biggest in an All-Ireland final for 41 years.

**DUBLIN:** 1. Stephen Cluxton (capt.); 3. Cian O'Sullivan; 2. Philip McMahon; 6. Jonny Cooper; 5. John Small; 4. Eoin Murchan; 7. Jack McCaffrey (0-1); 8. Brian Fenton (0-2); 9. James McCarthy; 10. Niall Scully (1-0); 11. Con O'Callaghan; 12. Brian Howard (0-1); 13. Paul Mannion (1-1, 1-0 penalty); 15. Dean Rock (0-7, 0-3 frees, 0-1-45); 14. Ciarán Kilkenny (0-3). Subs: 21. Michael Fitzsimons for O'Sullivan (27 mins); 19. Cormac Costello for Scully (53 mins); 25. Kevin McManamon (0-1) for Mannion (58 mins); 20. Darren Daly for Murchan (64 mins); 23. Eric Lowndes for Cooper (64 mins); 24. MDMacauley (0-1) for Rock (67 mins).  
**TYRONE:** 1. Niall Morgan; 5. Tiernan McCann (0-1); 3. Ronan McKernan; 4. Pádraig Hampsey (0-1); 2. Michael McKernan; 10. Matthew Donnelly (capt.); 18. Rory Brennan; 8. Colm Cavanagh; 25. Conor Meyler; 12. Kieran McGeary (0-1); 11. Niall Sludden; 9. Cathal McShane (0-2); 13. Mark Bradley (0-2); 7. Peter Harte (1-1, 0-1 penalty, 0-1 free); 15. Connor McAleisley (0-3, 0-3 free); Subs: 17. Lee Brennan (0-3, 0-3 free) for Meyler (40 mins); 14. Richard Donnelly for McAleisley (44 mins); 6. Frank Burns for Sludden (46 mins); 20. Harry Loughran for McGeary (black card, 49 mins); 22. Declan McCurtain for McShane (55 mins); 26. Ronan O'Neill for Bradley (62 mins).  
Referee: Conor Lane (Cork).

**Reaction**

## 'It's a physical contact sport, so it is what it is'

**Eamon Donoghue**  
at Croke Park

Dublin manager refuses to criticise Tyrone for dark arts but says his team focus on skill

Jim Gavin gives very little away in his dealings with the media, but it was maybe his shortest answer that best summed up Dublin's dominance in completing their four in a row.

Asked whether the achievement would have been possible without the influence of team captain and five-time All-Star goalkeeper Stephen Cluxton, the Dublin manager answered (following a pause and stutter): "I don't know."

What could he say? Answer yes and he'd be disrespecting a man he had seconds earlier described as being "hungry, he's

relentless, he's ruthless and that's a great trait to have in any captain. The leadership that he gives to other players and how he demands standards of himself first and foremost. I mean he's the first at training, he's the last to get off the pitch."

But he couldn't say no, either. Despite Cluxton making a record 200th senior appearance and finding a team-mate with 29 of his 31 kick-outs, to single out one individual would be against the ethos of his squad.

Dublin's victory was another triumph for the fundamentals of Gavin's philosophy: skill, relentlessness, patience, trust and decision-making.

**Kept going**

While Tyrone kicked 16 wides and took on 13 shots from outside the scoring zone – missing all but one of them – Dublin kicked only six wides. Even after trailing by 0-5 to 0-1 after 20 minutes against a team renowned for holding on to a lead, Dublin did not panic. "They go five-one up and have the momentum but our guys didn't

blink," said Gavin. "Which is a great characteristic to have. We've just kept going through the phases to get ourselves back in the game. Even at half-time – the game is only a break in play and it still needed to be finished – and the guys just stayed with our process of going through each phase of play."

When asked how important Dublin's first-half penalty and the stoppage in play for treatment to Paul Mannion proved in disrupting Tyrone's rhythm, the Round Towers club man said: "No. Well, I can't speak for Tyrone but if it happened to us we wouldn't flinch. It gave them an opportunity to recover if anything else..."

As for the off-the-ball niggles? Unlike previous years, when Dublin players have been at the centre of the controversy, this time it was the Dubs who were at the receiving end of the dark arts. But, as ever, there was no complaint: "It's an All-Ireland final. There's a lot on the line, so players are pushing each other really hard. It's a physical contact sport, so it is what it is..."



Dublin's manager Jim Gavin with Philip McMahon after the game. PHOTOGRAPH: TOMMY DICKSON/INPHO

"We go after the skills of the game. We've worked hard at it now over the last couple of years and probably got due reward. You know the first 10 or 15 minutes, they were a bit wayward, but the Tyrone boys put

**It's team, team, team and they've demonstrated that again today**

them under serious pressure. But that mental resolve within the Dublin team is just a pleasure to witness. And that collective ethos that they have. They see the prize is the collective

servicing the county, and not the self, and a lot of players there who didn't even get game time today... It's team, team, team and they've demonstrated that again today."

**Injury**

Even Bernard Brogan failed to make the match-day squad, despite completing his return from a cruciate ligament injury.

"It's probably the hardest part of the road giving that news that a player can't travel. Because you know how much they've put in and we can only name a limited number of players on match day. So that's the really difficult, challenging bit of the job. Because you're breaking a lad's dream essentially,

that he can't play in an All-Ireland final. So it wasn't just one player, we had 34 on the squad this year, and to be given that news, to eight players, is really tough."

He wasn't going to be drawn into talk of five in a row. Tyrone manager Mickey Harte, however, was happy to discuss the future. Harte expects Colm Cavanagh and the rest of his squad to all be available next year, with some crucial experience gained from yesterday's defeat.

"Dublin put you under pressure and they don't give you the shots in the right places, and that's true to a degree, but I think we made some very poor choices across the course of the game and if you'd even taken half of those out of the script, then things could've been very different. But it's a learning exercise for our players. Colm was the only player for us today who has played in an All-Ireland senior final before, so there was a lot of inexperience from our players at that level. But I just can't fault the players for the effort they put in."

**Dublin ratings**

By Malachy Clerkin



**1 Stephen Cluxton (Parnells)**



**7** Bit of a wobble early on with his kick-outs, enough to give Tyrone encouragement. One gorgeous ping to McCaffrey settled him and led to Dublin's first point from play. Faultless thereafter.

**2 Philly McMahon (Ballymun Kickhams)**



**5** His role is mostly keeping opposition forwards honest these days. Skipped forward to take a couple of shots, one wide, one blocked. Gave away a silly penalty when the game was dead.

**3 Cian O'Sullivan (Kilmacud Crokes)**



**5** Looked rocky along with the rest of the Dublin defence in the opening quarter. Pulled his hamstring a few steps after getting turned by Connor McAlisley and was gone on 26 minutes.

**4 Eoin Murchan (Na Fianna)**



**8** Terrific in his first All-Ireland final. Shut Niall Sludden down just as comprehensively as in Omagh earlier in the summer. Got the better of Mark Bradley and Lee Brennan as well.

**5 John Small (Ballymun Kickhams)**



**5** Another All-Ireland final, another red card. Did his spoiling job on Peter Harte to the letter but the theatrics do him no credit. Tried to get Harte sent off, got the line himself instead.

**6 Jonny Cooper (Na Fianna)**



**8** Had some hassle with Mark Bradley early on but recovered to boss the Dublin defence, especially when O'Sullivan went off. Pulled off one magnificent block in the first half.

**7 Jack McCaffrey (Clontarf)**



**8** Slayed the ghost of last year's final with a display that was full of bucking, careering menace. Even a fly-hack on a loose ball near the end found a grateful pair of Dublin hands.

**8 Brian Fenton (Raheny)**



**8** A peach of a footballer. Had Conor Meyler in his face – and more – throughout the first half but just brushed off the attention and eased into the game. Put up his usual two points.

**9 James McCarthy (Ballymun Kickhams)**



**7** The beating heart of the Dublin team. Athletic and competitive as ever in midfield and when Colm Cavanagh was switched to full-forward, went back to marshal the square.

**10 Niall Scully (Templeogue Synge Street)**



**8** Capped a brilliant season with another goal, stealing in off the wing just as he did against Donegal in the Super-8s and Galway in the semi-final, finisher rather than provider this time.

**11 Con O'Callaghan (Cuala)**



**8** His best performance all year, even if he didn't mark it with a score. Full of hungry running that stretched the Tyrone defence. His dummy to set up the Scully goal was sublime.

**12 Brian Howard (Raheny)**



**7** Not quite the all-singing, all-dancing Howard of earlier in the summer but hardly put a foot wrong either. Came out of defence with one soaring catch late on as Tyrone rained high ball.

**13 Paul Mannion (Kilmacud Crokes)**



**8** Man of the match candidate. If the penalty decision was debatable, his dispatch of it wasn't. Pulled off a fine tackle on the edge of his own square as well. Terrific game.

**14 Ciarán Kilkenny (Castleknock)**



**8** Quiet for the first 15 minutes but when he came into it, was his usual productive, industrious self. Tyrone sacrificed Tiernan McCann to try and stop him but Kilkenny wouldn't be denied.

**15 Dean Rock (Ballymun Kickhams)**



**7** Two early frees went askew but he didn't let it know him off his game. Scored three points from play – two of them in that period just after his misses, showing serious nerve.

**Substitutes**

**7** Mick Fitzsimons was an upgrade on O'Sullivan, Cormac Costello almost scored a goal with his first involvement. Kevin McManamon and Michael Darragh Macauley made hay as the game wound down.

**The manager – Jim Gavin**

**9** Four-in-a-row – what quibbles can you possibly make? Starting O'Sullivan was a risk that didn't pay off but otherwise, they were themselves – relentless, unerring, barely a hair out of place.



Jim Gavin with Paul Mannion after the game