

Donaghmore Ashbourne hurlers retained their Intermediate status for 2016 after producing another incredible second half performance to beat Moylagh by 9 points in Loman's Park, Trim. The Moors had trailed by 6 points at half time, but dug deep for the second time this season to blitz the side from Oldcastle.

Ashbourne started well, tapping over the opening four scores in the first six minutes, first from Stephen Meagher, then a brace of frees from Davey Carey sandwiched around a point from captain Martin Quinn.

Moylagh woke up after a sluggish start by hitting 7 scores without reply. Paddy Grail, Shane Nolan and Willy McGrath all striking over, before Nolan found himself in space inside the 21, drilling the ball past Sam Benville to give Moylagh the lead, which they extended further after scores from Grail, Owen Gilsean and McGrath.

Don/Ash were then awarded a penalty by referee Patrick Melia after a charge on Sean Robinson inside the squad, and Carey made no mistake putting it low into the corner. That was pegged back instantly at the other end, off the hurl of McGrath from a 65. Shaun Byrne got his name on the scoresheet in injury time, but the Moors were rocked by the concession of a second goal, Nolan again allowed space, and the same result occurred, the back of Benville's net rattled to give the scoreboard at half time a bit of gloss.

Similar to their game against Kilskyre, tactical changes at half time kicked off the Moors comeback. Moylagh did take two of the first three scores of the second 30, Ashbourne responding again through Carey, but a blitz of 2-3 in the next 9 minutes turned the playoff on its head. Carey's long free in dropped over the head of Keith Mahon for a bizarre goal, which was backed up by three more scores from him, including his first from play 3 minutes later. From that puck out, the ball was sent high in towards Graham Byrne, whose touch caused an almighty scramble to ensue inside the six yard box, the ball eventually flicked into the net off the boot of Conor Carey. Mahon was taken off as a result, but his replacement gifted Ashbourne their fourth goal with 17 minutes left. Cian Field turned his man and hit off his weak side from the 21 yard line. The ball slowly bounced past Jim Tuite, and neither he nor the keeper could react as it trickled over the line. All the momentum was with the south Meath team, another Carey free left the gap at six despite points from McGrath and Tom Melia. With 10 minutes left Carey completed his hat trick in sensational style. A long ball was pumped forward from Adrian McManus, Carey controlled it with one touch and rifled it into the roof of the net with the other, the ball never touching the ground, a truly special goal that the likes of Canning or Power would be proud of. It killed off any hope of a Moylagh comeback, although they did get in on goal again only to be thwarted on the goal line by Shaun Byrne's chasing. Late points from subs Bruton and Randle confirmed it – Donaghmore/Ashbourne will play Intermediate hurling in 2016.

There's one more game left for Don/Ash, a Division 3 final of the league, the team bidding to win their second piece of silverware in three seasons. Don/Ash management would like to note their appreciation of Molly's Bar for their sponsorship throughout the year.

Don/Ash team – Sean Benville, Paul Finglas, Matiú Baxter, Sam Benville, Aonghus Mulvihill, Conor Carey (1-00), Sean Robinson, Martin Quinn (0-01, C), Shaun Byrne (0-01), Cian Field (1-00), Adrian McManus, Stephen Meagher (0-01), Danny Deery, Eoin Caffrey, Davey Carey (3-08, 7 frees).

Subs: Graham Byrne for Caffrey, Terry Bruton (0-01) for Robinson (both HT), James McKeown for Baxter (47), Colm Randle (0-01) for Deery (49), Martin Doherty for Field. Unused subs: Daire Kelly, David Kent, Luke Andrews, Darragh Morrissey.

