

# Down daddy up for return

**JEROME JOHNSTON** is open to a return to the Down senior football squad.

By **GORDON MANNING**

Johnston (below) was one of a number of players who opted not to commit to the county in 2021, but when Kilcoo's club journey comes to an end the talented forward says he would be open to a call from new Mourne boss James McCartan.

It was too dangerous with the circumstances. "I didn't want to be putting her at risk by bringing Covid home."

"Nobody knew if it affected a child. The priority was keeping my distance from people as much as possible." "Thankfully he has arrived and it was the best moment of my life."



He said: "Absolutely. At the minute the focus is completely with Kilcoo. James is respecting that."

"I haven't been chatting to James yet, but I am sure once Kilcoo is over, hopefully James will chat with a number of boys." Johnston, 28, took the decision to step away based on his personal situation - girlfriend Sheryl was expecting their first child.

Johnston explained: "We were getting ready for the birth of our son,

Lár was born in August and in the months since his Dad has been busy helping Kilcoo back to another Ulster club final.

On Sunday they face Fermanagh's Derrygonnelly in the provincial decider at the Athletic Grounds at 3.45pm.

Johnston said: "They have been formidable this year in Fermanagh and Ulster. They beat a Dro-mo team that won Tyrone, they beat a very fancied Clann Éireann, two massive."

# GAA MUNSTER SFC FINAL

## FULL-BACK TO THE FUTURE

### Stacks' Dylan eager to spread his wings and McFly for Kerry



**DYL-OREAN** . . . Austin Stacks man Casey hopes that in the near future he will be revving it up at senior inter-county level

By **GORDON MANNING**

GAA CORRESPONDENT



**DYLAN CASEY** might eventually become Kerry's guardian of the square - but for now all he wants to do is to ensure he Stacks up in Sunday's AIB Munster club SFC final.

Casey, 21, is being tipped as a Kerry full-back in the very near future.

On Sunday, he will captain Austin Stacks in their provincial decider against Cork's St Finbarr's at Semple Stadium in Thurles.

His solid displays in recent months have seen him called up by new Kerry boss Jack O'Connor and Casey will join the Kingdom panel whenever the club adventure comes to an end.

He said: "Obviously it's something that I strive towards."

"There's an incredible amount of defenders inside in the Kerry set-up but it's obviously something that's in my own head and it's something that I've been wanting to do since I was very young, since I was born I suppose - like every other child in Kerry, to put on the green and gold."

"It's something that we gear towards as footballers down here and something that I'll hopefully achieve in the long run."

"But concentrating on the club is my main priority now."

"Obviously it's nice to be brought in by Jack and the management team and it's something I can look forward to when it comes to it over the next few months, but hopefully we still have a long run with the club in store for the next few weeks and months."

Casey has learned his craft with help from one of the best full-forwards to play the game - his club-mate Kieran Donaghy (above).

He explained: "I would have the job of marking him at full-back in training, yeah. Kieran has been brilliant with me,

and also the rest of the younger fellas that have come into the set-up in recent times.

"Just his knowledge and experience of the game, there are always little snippets that he'd give you as well, nearly teach you on the field, where you are nearly like, 'right, the next time I mark him how can I better myself?'"

"Obviously his overhead fielding and his positioning under the ball is second to none, and he was probably one of the best in the game at it over the last decade or so."

"It's something I relish, going to training on a weekly basis, learning from him. No better fella to learn from."

"Initially when I went in with the seniors and I started playing full-back, it was kind of nearly a surreal moment marking probably my idol and my hero growing up in Kieran Donaghy."

"The first few sessions were a bit hairy, I was probably getting to grips with how good he actually was, but thankfully I have come a bit further away from that and kind of learning how to mark him now at this stage, three or four years down the line."

"He's obviously somebody I look up towards and try to gain as much knowledge and experience off as much as possible, yeah."

Casey has been handed the job by Stacks of marking the likes of Seán O'Shea and David Clifford in recent months as well, so he has picked up some of the best players in the game.

And on Sunday he will be coming up against some opponents who at different times are also team-mates. Cillian Myers-Murray and Brian Hayes of St Finbarr's are on the UCC Sigerson panel, as is Casey.

He said: "Yeah, there's a few fellas I would know well from playing college football above in Cork that are playing with the Barrs. I would have played one year of Sigerson with both of them."

● THE AIB Munster Club SFC final between Austin Stacks and St Finbarr's takes place at Semple Stadium on Sunday at 1.45pm.



**FIRST PAST THE POST** . . . Casey and Co enjoy the Kerry final win over Kieran O'Rahilly's for Stacks' 13th county title

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**39 hours per week.**  
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Alison and Andrew Cullen are applying for Planning Permission for (1) conversion of attic space to non-habitable space with Dormer window to rear and (2) single storey porch to front of existing dwelling and all associate site works at 29 Rushbrook Grove, Templeogue, Dublin 6W. This application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of South Dublin County Council during its public opening hours of 9am - 4pm, Mon-Fri, and a submission or observation may be made to South Dublin County Council in writing and on payment of the prescribed fee (€20.00) within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by South Dublin County Council of the application.

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