

Seahawks are at fives for next year

NFL: THE layers have pitched up their ante-post outright prices for next season's American NFL and Seattle Seahawks have been put in as favourites. Though Paddy Power installed Seahawks as a 5-1 shot 888sport are willing to lay punters 13-2 which is the top odds around in the industry. San Francisco 49ers are the general second-favourites. 49ers are just 13-2 with Stan James but bwin consider the side to be an 8-1 runner. Denver Broncos are now 8-1 with skyBET.

Value is in handicap

RUGBY: THERE, of course, is a host of other markets available on the Ireland-Wales Six Nations encounter with the hosts two-point favourites to win the tie generally. Ireland are 10-11 giving their opponents a two-point head-start while Wales can be supported at evens with Stan James in receipt of the imposed buffer. The handicap betting draw is a best-available 25-1 with Boyles. Additionally, Ireland are 11-8 with William Hill to be leading at half-time and full-time. Wales/Wales is 9-4, too.

Hall are favourites

LOCAL SOCCER: IN localised soccer this weekend Ladbrokes and Paddy Power have prices available on various clashes. For instance, with Ladbrokes Blarney are 4-1 for their meeting with 1-2 chances Douglas Hall. The draw is 13-5. Midleton are 1-4 to defeat Youghal, 15-2 with The Magic Sign, while the draw is 7-2. Rockmount can be punted on at 2-9 to beat 8-1 shots Tramore with the draw 7-2. Northsiders Leeds, 7-2, host Avondale United, 8-15 and the draw is 13-5.

Layers like Ireland

RUGBY: BETFRED, Coral and winner have placed Ireland as a 4-5 chance to post a victory over Wales in the Six Nations on Saturday afternoon. Stan James, however, are one of the firms with more belief in Ireland rating them as a 4-6 poke while they are laying Wales at an industry-high 5-4. The draw is 22-1 with skyBET and Boyles. Punters have not decided as yet where their hard-earned cash will be going on the game in Dublin, however.

Cork are on drift in match betting

CORK were strong odds-on favourites to win their clash with Kildare in the Allianz NFL Division 1 at Páirc Uí Rinn on Sunday afternoon.

However, the Rebels have been drifting in the match betting market ever since the original prices were released by the odds-compilers.

For example, skyBET have pushed Brian Cuthbert's men out to 4-6, presently the top price, while BetVictor's and Ladbrokes' revised odds suggest the Leesiders are virtually friendless in the market, too.

Kildare, in contrast, have come in for steady support with their odds being trimmed consistently in the past few days.

In fact, the Lilywhites are now as low as 6-4 to prevail on Sunday.

Yet, Stan James are holding Kildare out at 2-1, the best-available odds on offer throughout the industry.

The draw, incidentally, is 15-2 generally.

Admittedly, Stan James' quote of 2-1 about an away win seems to be on the large side, certainly in relation to skyBET's offering and the context of the game as Cork are without key operators.

Still, Kildare are far from being able to choose from a fully-fit squad themselves.

Nevertheless, there was a lot to like about the way Kildare went about their business against Mayo previously and they command respect.



SPORTS BETTING
Peter McNamara

However, there exists vibrancy and fearlessness surrounding the present Cork group and those attributes can carry teams a hell of a long way, especially in the earlier stages of a given year.

Furthermore, having spoken, at length, to boss Jason Ryan this week it was genuinely obvious he is extremely wary of Cork and the top-class performances they can produce.

There could be a recurring theme this year regarding the Leesiders.

It may be that they are underestimated by the bookmakers because of this perception they are in 'transition'.

Yet, the vast majority of Cuthbert's panel are psychologically tough, a prerequisite to survive at the exalted standard in question and, with that in mind, skyBET's 10-11 about Cork adding to their win over Westmeath in the section with another by two points or greater appeals.

True, the Leesiders will require massively influential performances from their players positioned around the middle third, as has been illustrated throughout this week.

Still, they deserve the opportunity to excel in the grade, certainly the more in-



Cork's Aidan Walsh challenges Westmeath's John Egan during last week's National League game at Páirc Uí Rinn. Picture: Diarmuid Greene / SPORTSFILÉ

experienced players do anyway and even if Stan James turn out to be completely wrong in offering Kildare at 2s I am confident, that by supporting Cork throughout the year punters will finish the season in profit.

Kildare, meanwhile, are 5-6 +2 with Power and from the reading of the situation those odds are more likely to contract between now and throw-in time instead of expanding.

Still, if Cork breaks even at least in the midfield zone the Rebels possess the more deadly attackers necessary to convert possession into the scores required to secure another two points on the league board.

Furthermore, Cork are merely 11-8 with Power and Ladbrokes to be in control at the interval and full-time.

RECOMMENDATION

Cork -1: 2pts 10-11 skyBET.

LAST WEEK

THERE were no recommendations made last weekend as value was practically non-existent across the main sporting codes. It is vitally important, especially at present, to not punt for the sake of punting however hopefully further profits can be gleaned this weekend from our outlays involving the aforementioned matches.

Winter Olympics in Russia could be on a slippery slope

THERE has been a lot of talk in the build-up to the Winter Olympics in Sochi and very little of it has been about sport.

We have a Games that is going to cost as much to stage as all the other Winter Olympics combined.

There's a very real threat of someone blowing something up (toothpaste is the latest danger apparently) because the venue is close to several countries that are not exactly friendly to Russia.

And gay people are being made feel about as welcome as salt on a ski slope (according to Sochi's mayor, Antoly Pakahamov, there are no homosexuals in the city, or, as he later clarified: "I don't know any of them.")

In this part of the world it is difficult to get too excited about the winter version of the Olympics, because other than hoping British competitors will fall over, we haven't too much at stake in the action, with only five competitors.

We can hardly be blamed for our poor showing, as not many of the sports contested can actually be pursued with any great vigour on this island, because we lack that obligatory ingredient: snow.

Perhaps we should boycott the Games until more suitable contests to our winter conditions are offered. And if you think any of the following are far too bizarre to be included as a sport, let me just point you in the direction of curling.



Robert O'Shea
THE LONGSHOT

Walking on ice

Competitors must walk on ice. Simple as that. Robert Heffernan has shown we are quite handy at this on the non-slippery stuff and we could certainly give other countries a light jog for their money when it comes to sliding our way across pavements. Most places where freezing temperatures are

commonplace are well-prepared with salt and spiky soles so we would probably have an advantage.

A 1k ice walk on leather-bottom shoes would be a true challenge.

Falling on ice

Competitors are given marks out of 10 for the most dramatic slips on ice while the Benny Hill theme plays in the arena. We'd clean up in this category if we sent that guy from the Six-One News a few years back.

Kettle challenge

A standard kettle is chosen to be used by all competitors, who must begin this race asleep. An alarm wakes them up and they tear off. They must fill (the volume they choose is their own

decision) and switch on a kettle, then run out to a vehicle that is parked 200m from the building the kettle is in.

They can start the car and turn on the wipers before dashing back to the kettle. They then dash back to the car and pour the boiled water over a frozen windscreen. Then dash back to the building with the kettle and replace it in its holder. Once they have returned to the car they must drive a 2k course.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to my boss for being late for work this morning

Recommendation: We might give you some Olympic tips next week. For now, take Cork and Kildare to draw at Páirc Uí Rinn on Sunday at 15/2.