

Harlequins' win secures status

HARLEQUINS have secured their place in the Irish Hockey League for next season, thanks to a 3-0 win over Church of Ireland during the week.

This win now means Bandon can't catch them when they play each other next week in the last game of the season.

But Quins still have a lot to play for, as a score draw or a win, will see them pip UCC for second spot.

Goals from Cliodhna Sargent, Yvonne O'Byrne and Orla Cotter secured their win over Church of Ireland and next week they will be hoping to climb to second and that automatic Irish Hockey League Spot.

Should they do so UCC will have to face the play-off weekend, a task they won't look forward to as it comes in the middle of exams for many of their players.

Meanwhile, coach Ger O'Carroll has announced her squad for the forthcoming senior inter-pros, which are on in Dublin in a couple of weeks.

It is mainly made up of Catholic Institute and Harlequins players, bar their international ones who can't play.

Elaine Bromell and Johanna Hyland are co-captains of the side, which also includes the likes of Eimer Cregan and Sinead Connery from Hermes.

The full squad is: Elaine Bromell, Johanna Hyland, Naomi Carroll, Kate Collins-Smyth, Sinead Connery, Eimear Cregan, Kym Daly, Emer Horan, Rachel McSharry, Yvonne O'Byrne, Jennifer O'Loughlin, Ali O'Regan, Christine O'Shea, Ciara Ronan, Olivia Roycroft and Vanessa Sargent.

Also on shortly is the AGM of the Munster Branch of the Irish Hockey Association.

It will take place on Tuesday,



HOCKEY

By RORY NOONAN

May 3, at 7.30pm at The Fred South Room, Garryduff.

A number of interesting motions are on the agenda which in-

clude a recommendation from Bandon Hockey Club that the home club in games should make a contribution to defray umpires' expenses.

They are recommending this as a way to encourage younger people to umpire as travel costs may be one of the reasons pre-

Harlequins' Cliodhna Sargent scored in their 3-0 win over Church of Ireland during the week which secured their place in the Irish Hockey League for next season.

venting them from doing so at the moment.

This recommendation should cause some debate on the night and is well considering, especially in the current economic climate.

There are other motions too, including one by UCC and UL that they should play each other in the first game of the season.

However, above these the motion that is sure to cause the most debate is a proposal to reduce the men's division one league down to four teams, who would play each other four times, giving a total of 12 league games.

This is proposed by the Munster Fixtures Committee and they are proposing the first four clubs would be Harlequins, Church of Ireland first teams, along with UCC and Bandon.

As controversial as it may sound this may be good for Munster hockey in the long-term, making this league and division two more competitive.

With these, and other motions, the AGM is sure to draw large numbers to Garryduff on the night.

Veiled threat might lead to recognition that's not deserved

IT'S A bit of a bugbear for me having a picture byline accompanying this piece every day in the paper.

I find it unnerving typing it while dimly aware that my own two eyes stare at me, scanning my face for indecision. I can only imagine how disturbing this is for you reading it. Just stop for a moment and take a look at me gazing back at you, with barely hidden contempt.

Because the other problem is you are stuck with whatever face you were pulling when the photo was taken. While I'm glad that I managed to avoid a clownish grin, the youthful smirk I have plastered on is there forever. So even if I go months without tipping a winner I'll

still be there looking smug, while you will be wondering what I have got to be so smug about.

While every photo I possess of myself was taken when I was younger, some people have suggested the ravages of time have tarnished me greatly since the one that appears above right was snapped and have advised me to have it updated or at least photoshop in a double chin and receding hairline.

I have reluctantly come around to their way of thinking.

First I thought I'd get 15 different pictures and allow readers to vote for their favourite in a sort of X-factor showdown. Then I considered using a different one of the pictures each day depending on



how good my tips were that week, but scratched this idea because my sullen visage might begin to depress me.

The other problem with getting a more recent mugshot is that I might begin to be recognised/accosted.

This only happened a few times when I looked more like I did above and the subsequent awkward conversations

passed with only minimal fear on my part on each occasion.

This might have changed now that I am giving people terrible advice of what to do with their hard-earned moolah. I can foresee that if things get any worse on the tipping front and I begin to resemble my byline, I might be forced to make public appearances in disguise.

Better yet, I could pose for my new picture while wearing a burkha.

After the banning of the Muslim cloak in France, Powers are offering a book on which country will be next to ban it.

Holland are the 5-4 favourites, Germany 2-1 and Italy 5-1. It's a 100-1 that I won't be able to counteract my new byline with the veil tactic in this country.

Pembroke to face uphill Spanish task

MEN'S HOCKEY

By FRED TREACY

THERE is one Division One men's hockey game in Munster, where UCC travel to Cork C of I B, whom they defeated 4-1 on home turf last weekend.

Meanwhile, Pembroke Wanderers are charged with the task of causing one of the biggest upsets in EuroHockey League history when they take on Spain's Club de Campo at Bloemendaal, near Amsterdam, today.

With influential South African trio Gowan Jones, Jethro Eustice and Brandon Panther failing to return to the club after Christmas and midfield pivot Paddy Conlon ruled out through injury, Pembroke are light on quality. Campo, who recently annexed a first Spanish title since 2005, have plenty of that in their ranks, and also feature Irish skipper and former Pembroke man Ronan Gormley, whose insider knowledge gives a further advantage to the Madrid outfit. That may instead mean that Ireland's best chance of getting a side into the last eight lies with Glenanne, who take on Dutch side HGC.

The latter, for whom Cork's John Jermyn and Belfast man Iain Lewers played for when they reached the EHL final in 2008, are living off past glories and are well off the pace in the Dutch Hoofdklasse. They will nonetheless carry the favourites' mantle against Leinster champions Glens.

Graham Shaw's experience will be crucial to the Tallaght side's hopes, while recent Irish cap, 18-year-old Shane O'Donoghue, will be keen to make his mark on the European stage.

Irish interest in the competition extends beyond the two ties involving Dublin sides; Stephen Butler and Eugene Magee will line out in the colours of Belgium's KHC Dragons against Germany's Rot-Weiss Koln. Former Cookstown man David Ames will be leading English outfit Beeston's charge against Dinamo Kazan, while fellow Ulster man Chris Cargo will be hoping to propel Reading in an all-English affair against East Grinstead. Elsewhere, European hockey is also coming to Dublin this weekend, with Railway Union hosting the EuroHockey Club Champions Trophy at Park Avenue in Sandymount.

Mick McKinnon's charges, who have already annexed a European title in the indoor game this term, are in Pool A alongside Belgium's Royal Wellington, MSC Sumchanka of the Ukraine and HF Libertas San Saba from Italy. Railway will play each of their pool games at 3pm today, tomorrow and Sunday, starting with Sumchanka this afternoon.

Elsewhere, Ireland's senior women's preparations for their summer commitments continue apace with a three-game series against France at Serpentine Avenue and UCD this weekend.

Gene Muller's charges will be hoping for better fortune than their male counterparts, who twice drew 0-0 against Canada in Stormont and lost 2-1 in Dublin last weekend.

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