

# Hoggie leads first goal odds

**C**ORK were installed as the one-point favourites to win the All-Ireland SHC final against Clare in regulation time in the last number of days as the layers remain keen to keep Jimmy Barry-Murphy's unit inside in the various markets.

The Rebels have retained their position as odds-on outright favourites despite Clare's ultra-impressive disposal of Limerick in Croke Park last Sunday afternoon.

Cork's odds to lift the trophy vary from bet365's 3-4, the top industry price, to Stan James' and Ladbrokes' 8-13. Boyles, Stan James and Ladbrokes, meanwhile, rate Clare as a 6-5 shot to capture the silverware.

Incidentally, both counties are joint-second favourites at 9-2 with Paddy Power to win the ultimate prize next year — Kilkenny are the 5-2 market leaders. In terms of the early match betting odds for the final, Boyles and Ladbrokes expect Cork to post a game-winning total laying 8-11 though bet365 and Power, though agreeing with their competitors on the Rebels' role as jollies, are less convinced offering bettors 5-6. Clare, on the other hand, can be

## Sports betting

By Peter McNamara

supported at 11-8 with Boyles, Stan James and Ladbrokes while the draw is generally available at 10-1. However, a sure-fire sign the layers are not even totally convinced themselves of how the contest will play out on September 8 is represented in the handicap betting market.

The odds-compilers have pitched the main line at one point with Cork 11-10 to win by two or more points and Clare 11-10 in receipt of a one-point buffer though the majority of firms have Davy Fitzgerald's side slight odds-on +1. At the head of the first goalscorer market, Patrick Horgan is either outright or joint-favourite to raise the first green flag of the showpiece as the Glen Rovers clubman is 11-2 with Power, 6-1 with bet365 and a best-available 13-2 at Boyles.

Next in the list is Darach Honan as bet365 lay 7-1 while Luke O'Farrell, generally third favourite, is on offer at 8-1 with the same firm. Generally, the prospect of 'no goalscorer' is a 10-1 chance and Conor Lehane is being pitched at 14-1 with Power.



Patrick Horgan is either outright or joint-favourite to score the first goal in the All-Ireland final.

## Cork City are certainly worth a small punt

### FORD FAI CUP

WITH the second-best home defensive record to boast in the league, Sligo Rovers deservedly head into their Ford FAI Cup meeting with Cork City tomorrow night as strong odds-on favourites to progress in regulation time.

Sligo, no better than 4-7 with Boyles, Paddy Power and Ladbrokes while being as short as 1-2 to win the match, have conceded just seven goals in the premier division this term at The Showgrounds which puts into perspective how difficult an assignment this may be for Stuart Ashton's Leesiders.

Evidently, Sligo are a tricky side to breach while the offensive-minded quartet of Joseph Ndo, Anthony Elding, Danny North and Raffaele Cretaro can tear teams apart when on song.

Additionally, they are 16 points superior to City in the Airtricity League standings while winning seven and drawing one of their 12 home fixtures in the section.

Therefore, it is more than understandable the layers expect the Bit O'Red to qualify. However, there is reason to believe City will be more competitive in this tie than quotes of 11-2 from bet365 and BetVictor suggest.

Ladbrokes are offering City at 4-1 to win and even that quote seems slightly too big — realistically, in the form City are presently in since Ashton's arrival, the Leesiders should be a top price of 100-30, especially given Sligo have lost their last two competitive fixtures to Shamrock Rovers 3-2 in the EA Sports Cup and 2-0 to Dundalk more recently at Oriel Park in the league.

Still, it might be asking too much of City to win tomorrow night.

Yet, they can certainly push Sligo all the way and could even force a draw.

Odds on the game ending level are 3-1 with bet365, BetVictor and 188BET.com but of greater interest is the 13-8 available with bet365 with City taking a one-goal handicap betting lead into the encounter.

Confidence within City's camp must be higher than at any stage in the last number of months and Ashton's infectious positivity will guard against them lacking in self-belief.

At the price of 13-8 a minor stakes punt is advised as City are more than capable of scoring at least once in The Showgrounds. Elding, incidentally, is the 7-2 market leader to notch first with Ladbrokes.

Danny Morrissey can also be backed at 7-1 with The Magic Sign to score first.

**Recommendation:** Cork City +1: 0.5pt 13-8 bet365.

## Last week

**CLARE'S** All-Ireland SHC semi-final triumph ensured another winner for the column. Davy Fitzgerald's side, as was the case prior to their win over Galway, were confidently advised to prove their outsiders' tag inaccurate. Clare were tipped to win (2pts 11-8 Paddy Power) which re-

turned a healthy profit though punters were unfortunate to not also land the investment on them winning by 4-6 points in the winning margin market again (0.5pt 13-2 Paddy Power) prevailing by seven. Colm Galvin was also recommended to minimal stakes to be named RTÉ Man of the Match (0.25pt 33-1 general).

## Caught red-handed: Harte can smuggle Tyrone into final

ALL of us suffer from delusions to a certain extent.

For example, I've always imagined I would be able to smuggle drugs through an airport. How? Well I don't know who might be reading this, so instead I will tell you of one of the ruses I abandoned, just to prove how ingenious my actual ploy is.

So I'm walking through security and the Alsatian goes ape, straining at the leash, demented barking.

A customs guard approaches and places his hand on my chest.

"The dog. He doesn't like you."

"No," I reply, "I think he likes me very much."

A bead of sweat rolls down the

guard's brow, while my own forehead remains as arid and cool as a bowling ball on the moon.

From my pocket I pull out a wrapped string of sausages.

A smile breaks over the guard's face.

"A ha!" he says, "the dog must have been barking at the smell of this pork product."

I offer the sausages to the guard and he says the dog has a strict diet of nuts as he waves me on.

What would the guard have found if he had torn open the casing of one of the sausages?

Nothing but pigmeat, because the drugs would be in my other pocket or stuck up my bum.



### Robert O'Shea

#### THE LONGSHOT

All this is not to say I would ever attempt such a criminal undertaking. Some of those dogs are vegetarians after all.

But what the above story goes to show is that often we are overly confident in our ability to perform a task.

Another example: Some people probably believe that penning this

column is a pile of pee and that anyone with a computer, a bog-standard vocabulary and a basic grasp of betting markets could do it.

How wrong they would be.

You also need, in no particular order: a fistful of chutzpah, little self-respect, a willingness to listen to smelly strangers tell you about bad beats, have a body mass index below 24 and always be ready to question yourself when sentences seem to be going nowhere.

**Are you going to get to the point of today's article soon?**

On the subject of delusion, we come to Mayo football.

There was a book written on this subject a few years back and it was

called *House of Pain* and with good reason.

A few weeks back I picked the men from the West to hockey Donegal, which they duly did. And they were magnificent in doing so.

Now everything points to them overcoming Tyrone (not as dominantly) this Sunday to reach their second successive final. And the whole country bar their opposition would be behind them to finally lay the ghost to rest on that day.

But our concern is that history tells us that, in Mayo, hope goes hand in hand with delusion.

**Recommendation:** Tyrone to beat Mayo half-time and full time at 9/1 with nearly every firm.