

Evening Echo Maura shows her true Olympian spirit

SPORT

IN SPORT TODAY

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A RECENT Motor Activities event organised by the Munster Special Olympics branch proved a huge success for the competing West Cork participants, **writes GER McCARTHY.**

Lisnagry in Limerick was the venue for a Motor Activities event to promote the fine motor skills of participating athletes and continue their path to a possible appearance at the Special Olympic national games.

Laura Levis is the Leisure, Recreation and Physical Activity supervisor for the West Cork COPE

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Foundation and outlines the positive effect the event had on her organisation's members.

"It makes you exceptionally proud to see the athletes successfully compete in these motor activity events because to them it is the equivalent of climbing Mount Everest.

"Such events are an excellent outlet for the athletes as they compete individually and get complete attention, plus a solo platform to display their abilities."

West Cork's Maura O'Driscoll, who recently underwent cataract surgery competed in the beanbag lift and the small ball lift in Limerick. In previous years Maura competed at level one, which required a lot of physical and verbal aid from her coach.

Levis explains Maura's subsequent progress: "This year Maura was able to reach out, grasp the bean bag, lift it up, transfer it to the box, lower it and release it independently with little encouragement needed. This task transfers across to Maura's everyday life in allowing

her to independently pick up a cup, bring it to her mouth, drink and then lower it, at her own pace." Everyone who attended the event received medals for their participation.

The full list of competing West Cork COPE foundation athletes included Margaret Cullinane, Johnny Brennan, Martha Harte, Marion McCarthy, Paddy O'Driscoll, Maura O'Driscoll and Ben O'Donovan. Information on COPE and the Special Olympics can be found on: www.copefoundation.ie and www.specialolympics.ie.

SPORTS DIGEST

Morby is O'Sullivan's opponent

BOXING

PORTSMOUTH southpaw Paul Morby has been named as the opponent for Cork's Gary O'Sullivan in Glasgow on Saturday night, **writes BERNARD O'NEILL.**

Current Irish champ O'Sullivan, who boxes out of Pascal Collins' gym, will be seeking to stretch his undefeated run to 14 at the Braehead Arena in Glasgow on March 10.

His stable mate, Stephen Ormond, will co-feature versus Paul Appleby for the vacant Celtic super featherweight crown on a promotion headed by Ricky Burns' WBO lightweight title defence against Paulus Moses.

Undefeated O'Sullivan, who has won his last three fights inside the distance, says that if he gets the chance to take the early route to victory again on Saturday that he won't have to be asked twice.

If he comes through the six-rounder, then the Cork ace could be in line for a shot at British southpaw Billy 'Superb' Joe Saunders this summer. Coach Pascal Collins, a brother of ex World champ Steve, said that they are looking to build up O'Sullivan's rankings this year. Saturday's show will be broadcast live on BoxNation.

CAMOGIE

Cork 1-8 Tipperary 2-1

CORK overcame the challenge posed by Tipperary in the second camogie legends tournament, which was hosted by St Jude's GAA over the weekend, **writes MARY NEWMAN.**

Fiona O'Driscoll was to the fore, as the former Cork stars booked their place in the final, where she notched up five points of Cork's tally. In the final Tipperary led at half time by 2-1 to 1-3, with Niamh Bonner and Maria Harkin on target with goals while Regina O'Meara added a point. Nora Aherne had a Cork goal before the break and with points from O'Driscoll and Vivienne Harris, Cork kept in touch.

Clare Madded kept Tipp in the game with some excellent saves and in the second half Cork powered by O'Driscoll began to wear Tipp down. Three points from O'Driscoll plus one each from Irene O'Keeffe and Paula O'Connor helped Cork secure victory for the first time in the tournament.

Mary Fulham (nurse) and Marion McCarthy at the opening ceremony of the recent Motor Activities Special Olympics event at Lisnagry, Limerick. See above for story.



Fiona O'Driscoll was named as Player of the Tournament following splendid displays all through.

Scorers for Cork: F O'Driscoll 0-5 (0-3f); N Aherne 1-0; V Harris, I O'Keeffe, P O'Connor 0-1 each

Tipperary: N Bonner, M Harkin 1-0 each; R O'Meara 0-1

CORK: K Costine, M Deasy, F O'Driscoll, T Doyle, N Aherne, P O'Connor, I O'Keeffe, V Harris, L O'Neill, M Finn.

TIPPERARY: N Kennedy, A McDermott, R O'Meara, M Stokes, T Bourke, B Morris, D Hughes, C Madden, N Bonner, M Harkin.

THAI BOXING

ONE of the biggest fight nights in Cork in a while is on the horizon and tickets are selling fast for the April 7 Irish title bout at Moran's Silver Springs Hotel, **writes NOEL SPILLANE.**

The fight is a re-match between Irish champion, Shane O'Neill of the Fighting Fit Gym on MacCurtain Street and challenger Josh Tannian from Ballincollig's Spartan Gym in the 59.5 kilo class.

Tannian actually beat O'Neill in a non-title contest last year so this re-match is eagerly awaited by fight fans in the city and county. One of the club's other big promotions was the visit of eight-times world champion, Rob Kaman before Christmas when he held a specialised coaching session at the club.

ANGLING FIXTURES

Tonight: Cork SAC AGM at Blackrock Hurling & Football club, 8pm.
Monday: Great Island SAC Confined shore angling comp. at Cobh, 7-11pm.



Competing athlete, Ben O'Donovan celebrates winning his medal at recent Motor Activities Special Olympics event held in Lisnagry, Limerick.

GAA

Div 1 FL: Dohenys 2-7 Nemo Rangers 0-9.
Div 4 FL: Killavullen 1-4 Kanturk 3-10.

LADIES FOOTBALL

Bord Gáis Energy NFL (Round 5)
Sunday: Division 1: Donegal v Dublin, TBC, 2pm, (T McSorley); Cork v Laois, Fermoy, 2pm, (S Joy); Meath v Kildare, Ashbourne, 2pm, (P Kehoe); Tyrone v Monaghan, Healy Park, Omagh, 2pm, (T McShea).

RUGBY

IRELAND (women v Scotland): A Baxter (Belfast Harlequins/Ulster), N Kavanagh

(UL Bohemians/Munster), N Briggs (UL Bohemians/Munster), G Davitt (Cooke/Ulster), A Miller (Highfield/Connacht), L Cantwell (Exile), A Davis (Blackrock/Leinster), F Coghlan (UL Bohemians/Leinster) (capt), P Fitzpatrick (St Mary's College/Leinster), A Egan (Old Belvedere/Leinster), S Spence (Exile), M Louise Reilly (Old Belvedere/Leinster), L Guest (Highfield/Munster), C Molloy (Bristol/Connacht), J Neville (UL Bohemians/Munster).
Replacements: G Bourke (UL Bohemians/Munster), R O'Reilly (Galwegians/Connacht), S Fleming (Tralee/Munster), H O'Brien (Highfield/Munster), L Muldoon (Exile/Ulster), S Houston (Blackrock College/Leinster), J Murphy (Exile).

Deschamps the man to replace AVB



A VERY Brief reign. Another Victim of Blues. Authoritarian Vacates Bridge. Abramovich Vamooses Boss.

Annoying Vocabulary Bombast is no way to begin an article but it feels right to mark our goodbye to the acronym AVB, if only as it has been easy to fit those three letters into headlines.

The man who looked like he went to the same tailor as Jose Mourinho and the same barber as Enda Kenny got sacked by Roman Abramovich 257 days into his three-year project.

That was Villas-Boas's excuse when the wins weren't racking up — that he was in it for the long term at Stamford Bridge.

Did not one tell him what club he was joining? The one where the owner has a turnover of eight managers in eight years.

When I was in school you got about four weeks when asked to do a project, ended up doing it the night before and handed it in with the Pritt stick still gooey the next day.

Swansea boss Brendan Rodgers remains 18-1 with Paddy Power to take over the job, even after he ruled himself out of the running, saying he is looking to build his career and "not destroy it".

Big Phil, Luiz Felipe Scolari, failed to last a full season at Chelsea too and was fired amid similar claims of player unrest. The Brazilian warned: "It will be hell for whoever succeeds him."

Paddy Power make Jose Mourinho their 9-4 favourite to be the next permanent manager of Chelsea after his former protégé was sacked on Sunday.

The best prices on the rest of the likely lads are: Rafa Benitez 4-1; Pep Guardiola 7-1; Roberto Di Matteo and Fabio Capello 10-1 and Joachim Low 16-1.

I just can't see Mourinho going back and remain unconvinced about the rest.

Guus Hiddink is 25-1 with sportingbet.com, which seems sensible considering he has just taken up his first permanent club position in six years with Dagestani side Anzhi Makhachkala in the Russian League.

His new side — which includes Roberto Carlos and Samuel Eto'o — beat Dynamo Moscow on the road in his first game in charge this week and he received a €50,000 bonus. Yet Abramovich has plenty of shared interests with Russian billionaires and if he wanted his man next summer he would surely be able to negotiate it.

Recommendation: Instead we are going to plump for former Blues player and fellow 25-1 shot with William Hill, Marseilles boss Dider Deschamps.