

Evening Echo Connolly siblings do their family proud

SPORT

IN SPORT TODAY

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THE Connolly family are a versatile bunch with the brother and sister duo of Megan and Luke to the fore in a cross section of sports, **writes JOHN TARRANT**.

And the excellence of the sporting siblings secured them the monthly Southside and District Sports Awards hosted at the Cork International Airport Hotel. Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Seán Martin extended congratulations to the Connolly duo on them capturing the popular awards which are run in association with Gerald McCarthy

SOUTHSIDE AND DISTRICT SPORTS AWARDS

Awards and Gifts.

Fifteen year-old Megan is part of the Christ King Secondary School team that captured the All-Ireland Senior Cup and Munster Senior Cup in ladies soccer. At representative level, Megan is currently a member of the FAI national U16 side and figured on the Munster Schools Inter-provincial U15 team from 2009-2011. Older brother Luke is creating

inroads in gaelic football, his career took flight after helping Scoil Chríost Rí to a Corn Uí Mhuirí Munster Colleges SFC title. Operating with Nemo Rangers, Luke holds an assortment of accolades including back to back City U21 championships titles. Currently involved with UCC freshers, Luke is a former Cork minor that reached the 2010 All-Ireland MFC final. Nemo Rangers chairman Des McCarthy told the attendance that the Connolly family were steeped in

the club history. Principal of Christ King Secondary School Mary Keane commended Megan as a role model for her schoolmates and family. General manager at Cork International Airport Hotel Aaron Mansworth took delight on presenting the award to Megan and Luke. "It was a terrific effort by the pair of you. "These awards are merited and appreciated by families, friends and team mates," he said.

SPORTS DIGEST

ATHLETICS

SATURDAY sees the second staging of the Bandon Half-Marathon and 10K Run, following the success of last year's initial edition.

A joint-venture between Bandon RFC and Bandon AC, the two races, held under the auspices of Athletics Ireland, drew an estimable entry of 735 athletes this time last year and it is hoped that that number can increase second time round.

Vincent Duggan, president of Bandon RFC, says that the co-operation of Cork Sports Partnership should be a help in making the event even more successful.

In supervising the actual races themselves, the clubs complement each other in what they can provide.

Anybody who does take part is in for a scenic treat. The race starts in Old Chapel, near the rugby club, and heads out the Bandon-Clonakilty road before taking a right at the recycling centre.

Then there is a seven-mile loop over a selection of small country roads, crossing over the old West Cork railway line and runs adjacent to the Bandon River providing the opportunity for runners to really appreciate the landscape.

"It comes back into town past the golf club onto Castle Road and ends at Ballymodan Place, where the Garda station used to be," said Duggan.

There is a further boost for the event, and an incentive for the athletics club to build the new track that it is fundraising for, as Irish Olympic race-walker Robert Heffernan has said that he will put on coaching sessions in race-walking at the new facility.

As well as the racing entertainment, the Bandon Co-Marketing Group, which recently assisted in a mass gathering of leprechauns on St Patrick's Day, will be helping, as shops in the town put on special displays and attractions are laid on for children.

While online registration for the race is now closed, participants can still register on the day at the rugby club, or on Friday from 5-9pm, with early arrival recommended. A shuttle bus will ferry runners back to rugby club at the finish in Ballymodan Place.

Entry for both races is at very competitive rates, €30 for the half-marathon and €20 for the 10km. The half-marathon commences at 9.30am on Saturday, with the 10km taking off at 10.15am.

GAA

THE Warwickshire hurlers are hoping the guidance of former Cork star Cathal Casey can steer them to glory in their Lory Meagher Cup campaign, which gets underway this weekend.

The St Catherine's man, an All-Ire-



At the monthly Southside and District Sports Awards hosted at the Cork International Airport Hotel were, Mary Keane, principal Christ King, Gerald McCarthy, award sponsor, recipients, Megan Connolly for soccer and basketball and brother Luke Connolly, who accepts his award from Aaron Mansworth, GM Cork International Airport Hotel with Sean O'Sullivan, organiser. Also included are Bernard O'Connell, sports coach, CKSS, Pauline Hayes, PE teacher, Aisling Fox, captain of junior soccer team, Amanda Budden, captain of the senior football team, Megan Dennehy, Avril Burke, Fergal O'Leary, teacher and Fiona Darcy, Red FM. See story above. Picture: Ger Bonus



Tom Mullane, secretary Avondale United (right), makes a presentation to Chris McCart, Head of Youth Academy at Glasgow Celtic Football Club, to mark the signing by Celtic of Avondale's U17 player, Eoghan O'Connell (centre). Included are Ken Hurley (asst manager, left) and Kevin Daly (manager) Avondale's U17s. During the visit an Invitation Friendly game was played between Avondale U17s and Celtic's Training Academy.

land winner with Cork in 1990 and an AllStar in '91, has been brought in as a coach with Warwickshire this year to assist manager Steven Ahern, a former player with St Vincent's.

Warwickshire also have two Corkmen on their panel, goalkeeper Mike Cremin from Milford and Blackrock's Ruairí Wedel at corner-back.

They take on Leitrim in the Lory Meagher Cup, inter-county hurling's fourth-tier championship, on Saturday, with the winners set to face Tyrone or Fermanagh in the semi-final.

"Cathal has been a great help to us so far this year because he's got so much knowledge and experience," said Warwickshire captain Conall Maskey.

"He's taken us for a few sessions and there's a lot you can learn from a guy like that, so hopefully it'll all pay off for us."

GYMNASTICS

DOUGLAS Gymnastics Club, who have been selected to represent Ireland at the European Championships, are in Brussels this week.

The club have three gymnasts abroad competing in the women's junior and senior team events.

Sarah Buckley (15) is no stranger to international competition and she competes on bars as part of the senior team.

The junior qualification competition

takes place today followed by the senior qualification tomorrow.

Douglas coach Elaine Dilworth travels as Head of Delegation for the Irish squad.

The Men's European Championships take place this year in Montpellier in France from May 19/26 and again Douglas will be in action with Daniel Fox and Adam Dalton, both 16, competing in the junior men's section.

Both have a vast amount of experience in International competition.

Last month at the Celtic Cup held in Dublin, Adam Dalton won the Junior Bronze AA. Douglas coach Tim O'Donovan travels as coach for the junior men's team.

Kaymer to clean up at the Players



AFTER my day was put down in the Echo offices on Monday I took a stroll along the quays to take in the hint of sea whiff our river carries in from past Roche's Point.

What had also travelled up the Lee that morning, but with none of the subtlety of the mild stench of the ocean, was a big, if humdrum-looking, yacht.

In the days since there has been quite a degree of speculation as to who it was that steered this big boat into our harbour, with potshots resting on George Clooney and US businessmen billionaire golfers.

But who should I see standing on the foredeck that afternoon, but Frank G., a fabled unlucky gambler about the town, who hadn't been seen for a few years..

"Had a change of fortune Frank?" I yelled up at him.

"I have, and it's all from following your bets."

"Really?"

"No, not really, you fool. But I have been cleaning up for the... I mean on the golfers."

"Any tips for the Players this weekend?"

"Well, keep away from the favourites. McIlroy has two missed cuts out of two at Sawgrass and Tiger and Phil have managed just one win apiece there. Luckily for you, an outsider will win."

"KJ Choi won at 40-1 last year; Tim Clark in 2010 at 100-1; Stenson was 50-1 the year before and Garcia was 40-1 in 2008."

"Seven of the last 10 winners are non-Americans too," he added.

"So who should I tip?"

"Well, Martin Kaymer is 60-1 with Hills."

"He has progressive form at Sawgrass having finished 55th on his debut, 34th in 2010 and 19th last year while he was seventh in Malaysia last time out after making his first cut at Augusta in five attempts."

"He may not seem to be in top form, but he's still number eight in the world and he's finished outside the top 20 just once in six starts. Once he gets the sniff of victory, there are few better."

"Sound, Frank, send me a postcard from where you land next."

Recommendation: I found out yesterday Frank works as a cleaner and should have suspected something as he had a can of Pledge and a cloth in his hands. But Kaymer does make sense at 60-1.