

Three Rock will prove a test for C of I

MEN'S HOCKEY

By FRED TREACY

IN TOTAL, 30 clubs begin their quest for Irish Junior Cup honours this weekend with the playing of first round matches in this season's competition.

Rated as one of the toughest trophies to win in Irish hockey, there are four Cork clubs involved in first round matches with Cork Church of Ireland and Bandon having home ties, and Cork Harlequins and University College Cork facing long trips north for their matches.

The meeting of Cork Church of Ireland and Three Rock Rovers at Garryduff Sports Centre on Saturday promises to be a close and exciting tie between two clubs that have always featured prominently in Irish cup competitions.

Home advantage should be a big plus for Cork Church of Ireland and there is a quiet confidence that they can overcome the challenge of Three Rock Rovers.

Bandon will host Fingal at Bandon Grammar School for their first round tie. The Dublin club will be no easy opponents for Bandon who will have to be at their best to get a good result.

Of the two Cork clubs travelling, Cork Harlequins look to have the easier tie. They play South Antrim at the Laurelhill Sportszone and should be strong enough to come away with a win while UCC face a difficult task to overcome Mossley at The Glade.

The big match locally this weekend takes place at the Mardyke on Sunday between UCC and Cork Harlequins in the semi-final of the Peard Cup.

The two sides last met in the Munster Senior League Division 1 in mid October at the Mardyke with Cork Harlequins winning 4-1. Cork Harlequins will enter the match as favourites to repeat that win but they should get a tough match from the Students who continue to make progress under Neil Welch.

The second semi-final has been switched from Bandon and will now take place on Thursday next at Garryduff between Cork Church of Ireland and Bandon. Cork Church of Ireland will be strongly fancied to win this semi-final.

The full second round draw for the Irish Senior Cup is: YMCA v Lisnagarvey; Cork Church of Ireland v Kilkeel v Cookstown; NICS v Bandon; Weston v Banbridge; Fingal v Three Rock Rovers; Mossley v Monkstown; Instonians v UCD; Glenanne v Annadale. The second round matches will be played on Saturday, January 29 2011.

FIXTURES TOMORROW

Irish Junior Cup First Round: Bandon v Fingal, Bandon GS, 2.30pm; Cork Church of Ireland v Three Rock Rovers, Garryduff, 2.30pm; South Antrim v Cork Harlequins, Laurelhill Sportszone, 4pm; Mossley v UCC, The Glade, 1pm; Railway Union v Kilkeel, Park Avenue, 2.30pm; Monkstown v Raphoe, Rathdown, 3pm; Banbridge v Belfast Harlequins, Havelock Park, 2.30pm; NICS v Antrim, Stormont, 4pm; Clontarf v Pembroke Wanderers, Mount Temple, 3.30pm; North Down v Newry, Comber LC, 1pm; YMCA v Dublin University, Alexandra College, 1pm; Glenanne v Instonians, Glenanne Park, 3.30pm; UCD v Annadale, Belfield, 2.15pm; Lisnagarvey v Cookstown, Comber Road, 1pm; Corinthians v Armagh, Whitechurch, 2.45pm.

Munster Senior League Division 4: Cork Harlequins v Cork Church of Ireland F, Harlequin Park, 2.30pm.

SUNDAY

Peard Cup semi-final: UCC v Cork Harlequins, Mardyke, 2pm.

Munster Senior League Division 2: Limerick v Ashton, Villiers School, 12.30pm; Cork Harlequins C v Catholic Institute B, Harlequin Park, 12pm.

Division 3: Limerick B v Cork Church of Ireland E, Villiers School, 2pm; Belvedere v Bandon C, Ballincollig CS, 2pm; Cork Harlequins D v Middleton, Harlequin Park 2pm.

THURSDAY

Peard Cup semi-final: Bandon v Cork Church of Ireland, Garryduff, 8.15pm.

LADIES HOCKEY

By RORY NOONAN

LIKE many sports, hockey players and supporters will be hoping it's back to normal this weekend after an enforced break due to the weather.

All games were postponed on safety grounds and with the thaw taking some time there will be late decisions on some games, most likely tomorrow morning, in games where teams are travelling distances.

The main action tomorrow sees a number of Munster sides in action in the Irish Junior Cup, with the consolation that the furthest any of them have to travel is Dublin and not Ulster. Considering the recent weather, this will be of some relief to the travelling sides.

Church of Ireland are one of the sides on the road as they take on Old Alex. This side is a mixture of youth and experience and they are captained by Daragh Hill. Nothing unusual in that except that Dymphna, her mother, is one of the players she will be encouraging on the pitch.

Dymphna, among others, has been a magnificent servant for the Garryduff outfit and no doubt it will be a proud day for her to see Daragh captain them. Other players they will look to include: Elizabeth Wolfe, Louise Connolly, Pameley Wolfe, Julie Crowley and Elisa Buckley, in what will be a tough game for them to win.

Institute are also in Dublin as they are up against UCD, in what has been a good season for the Limerick outfit so far. They will relish this challenge and with the likes of Aoife Kearney, Edel Higgins, Rosie Pratt, Orla Curtin and Louise McSorley, in their side won't fear taking on the college girls.

Harlequins too make the trip to Dublin as they face Hermes, again another tough tie for the Cork outfit. Like their top side, they have undergone a number of changes in recent years but experienced heads like Kate Herbert, Fiona Higgins, Rachel O'Byrne and Sue Barry will be hoping to steer them through.

Bandon, which has suffered badly in the recent weather, will be hoping to lift a few people's spirits with a home tie against Loreto. Never an easy place to win they will make it difficult for their Leinster opponents and it would be no great surprise to see them emerge victorious from this one. Like Church of Ireland they



Daughter and mother Daragh and Dymphna Hill who will line out for Church of Ireland in the Irish Junior Cup. Daragh will captain the side. This is one of two mother and daughter Cork combinations playing in the cup.

UCC hoping to progress in Cup

have a mother and daughter combination in the squad, with Liz Buttimer and her daughter, Laura, lining out. UCC are at home to Genesis, in a game that is tough to call, but home advantage might swing it the Students' way. Ashton are up against Galway and on paper this might look like an easy game.

But Galway are never an easy side to beat and with a number of players returning to the club from Dublin, will prove a tough challenge for Ashton to get over, despite playing at home. Because of the cup there is a limited league programme, with only three division one games. Tomorrow, in a busy day for them, Ashton will also take on Belvedere in the league.

On recent form, Ashton, who are

having one of their best seasons in some time, should collect all points as they hope to make it a double celebration on the day.

On Sunday, UCC are up against Bandon and the college side will be looking to pick up all three points as they bid to close the gap on Catholic Institute at the top of the table.

Earlier in the season they drew, with UCC lucky to do so, and they won't underestimate the challenge Bandon will pose. That said, UCC know that nothing less than a win will be good enough and expect them to take the points.

For their part, Institute are in action against Church of Ireland on Sunday and having beaten them away from home already, should take the points at Rosbrien. Institute

are the form team and they are going to take some stopping. Church of Ireland are without regular keeper, Orla McCarthy, and with a few other players missing as well, will be up against it.

They certainly won't make it easy for Institute but with the likes of Kym Daly, Eimear Cregan and Elaine Bromell, expect the Limerick side to notch up another three points.

SATURDAY

Irish Junior Cup: UCD v Catholic Institute, noon. Old Alex v Church of Ireland, 1.30pm; Bandon v Loreto, 12.30pm; Hermes v Harlequins, 2.45pm; Ashton v Galway, 2.30pm and UCC v Genesis, 1pm.

Munster Senior League Division One: Belvedere v Ashton, 11.30am.

SUNDAY

Munster Senior League Division One: Bandon v UCC, 1pm. Catholic Institute v Church of Ireland, 1pm.

Dane Hansen may be the ace in the pack



London is a big city but it never dawned on me that it would be difficult to locate a moving mass of 80,000.

Two hours later I arrived in Trafalgar Square as the last speech was finishing.

After finding my photographer we headed for a pint, over which I decided that a picture essay would say more than an article ever could.

While my fees had been taken care of, I also needed money to survive.

At college in Dublin I had gone down

the part-time job route, but the thought of English people giving me orders, even if it was just to stack shelves, grated with me.

So I mooched off the folks and took up poker instead.

At first I wasn't too successful; a balaclava would have been necessary for me to conceal my excitement after receiving a good hand and I also had a habit of shouting out "House" whenever I got a full boat.

I would go on to win £4,000 over a year and a half, which would probably have seen me through college with some ease if I hadn't lost £5,000 over the same time frame.

My poker days are over now but it's always fascinating watching it on TV (on any channel other than Setanta which goes to five-minute ad breaks every sixth minute).

Tonight sees the ninth Poker Million final on Sky Sports 2 (live from 7pm til late).

Two years ago four Irishmen (including Cork's Ciaran O'Leary) made the final and Belfast's Marty Smyth won. The first Irishman to swim 100m in less than one minute and 1968 Olympian, Donacha O'Dea, won in 2004. Jimmy White took the title in 2003.

No Irishmen tonight, but the Brighton & Hove Albion FC chairman Tony Bloom plays, as does someone named James Bord, which is so close to James Bond that he must be good at cards.

Recommendation: The Scandinavian pair of Patrik Antonius and Gus Hansen contest their first PokerMillion final and both are 5-1 with BetFred.

Tonight, we'll plump for the ice-cool and erratic Dane Hansen to shake up the table.