

# Munster odds are tumbling down

**THE four Irish provinces turn their attentions back to the RaboDirect Pro 12 this weekend but it is in the Heineken Cup outright markets where the most punting activity has taken place.**

Munster went off a 14-1 shot to lift the trophy prior to a ball being kicked, however Ronan O'Gara's late heroics on consecutive occasions has replenished dwindling fate in Tony McGahan's team's capacity to make a significant impact on the competition this year.

Ladbroke's are the firm most impressed by what they have witnessed so far as Munster's outright odds have tumbled all the way down to 6-1 with The Magic Sign, the shortest odds in the business currently.

The majority of those in the odds-compiling community now believe Munster to be worthy third favourites behind Leinster (4-1) and Toulouse (5-1).

However, if you, as the layers now do, feel Munster have legitimate claims of winning the Heineken Cup the only place to bet is Paddy Power.

Despite Ladbroke's quote of 6-1 Paddy Power are laying 10-1, two points higher even than a number of others willing to offer 8-1.

It is the standout quote of the industry and were Munster to gain a positive result away to Scarlets, who they trail by one point in Pool 1, on December 10, the 10-1 will vanish.

In accordance with the reduction



PETER McNAMARA

## BETTING

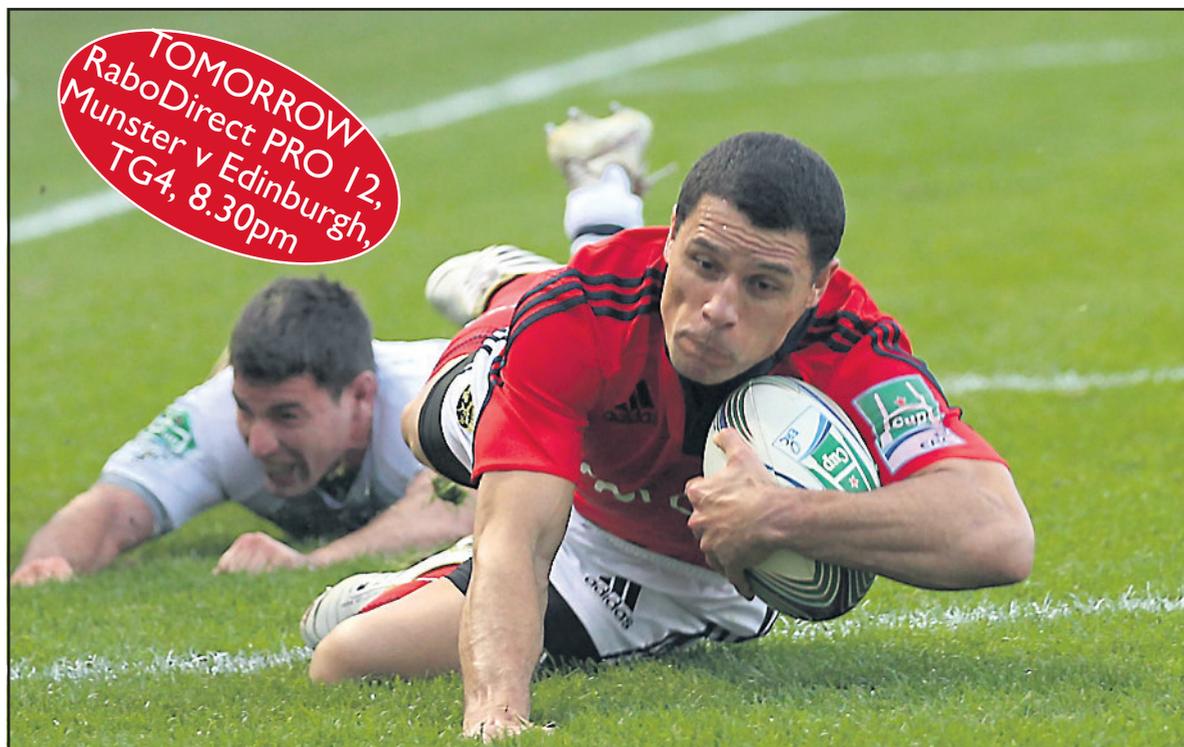
of outright odds available, the layers have also squeezed odds on offer on the depth of progression Munster make in Europe.

McGahan's side are 2-9 to reach the quarter-final with Ladbroke's, skyBET will lay you 5-4 about Munster making it to the last four and the same firm offer 100-30 (3-1 with Ladbroke's) that they progress to the final next May.

In the top tryscorer market, Doug Howlett and Tommy Bowe share favouritism at 13-2 with Paddy Power. ● The Ladbroke's.com PDC World Darts Championship is just around the corner and before a deluge of investments flood in for Phil Taylor to regain the title I would advise punters to take the even money available generally now, it is most likely to disappear quite quickly.

Mark Webster sensationally dumped Taylor out of last year's tournament at the quarter-final stage, however The Power is back to his ruthless best this year, a theory illustrated by his 16-4 destruction of Gary Anderson in the Grand Slam of Darts final recently.

Fully focused on the job there is



Munster's Doug Howlett scores a try against Castres Olympique during their Heineken Cup game last Saturday.

Picture: INPHO

none better and there should be no fear of complacency when backing Taylor. Punters on betfair have already begun to plunge in and doing so early is the key to availing of the mileage in the odds on offer with Taylor.

It is conceivable by the time the first dart is thrown on December 15 Taylor may well be closer to 8-13 or possibly even shorter.

At even money you can't go wrong.

Understandably, there is then a huge gap in the outright market to the second favourite Gary Anderson, 7-1 generally.

Defending champion Adrian Lewis and third seed James Wade are 10-1.

## RECOMMENDATION

**Phil Taylor to win the Ladbroke's.com PDC World Darts Championship:** 5pts evens generally.

● IT WAS no surprise to see Newcastle United lose their unbeaten run at the Etihad Stadium last Saturday, however Alan Pardew's team stand a much better chance of earning a positive result at Old Trafford tomorrow, certainly better than the layers are suggesting.

Pardew set up his team to take the game to Manchester City and had Demba Ba been as clinical against the league leaders as he has been so far this season, the plan might have paid dividends.

Ba had two decent chances to give Newcastle the lead before Mario

## LAST WEEK

NO BET was recommended in this particular column however our GAA investments unfortunately came up short with Dr Croke's leaving us a point shy of claiming a handicap victory over Kilmurry-Ibrickane. On the plus side, our ante-post recommendation on Dr Croke's winning Munster is in good order.

Balotelli (penalty) and Micah Richards gave the hosts a 2-0 half-time advantage in the space of three minutes approaching the interval.

If Pardew opts to take a similarly aggressive approach to his team selection and tactics tomorrow he may get rewarded for his bravery.

United are not losing matches it has to be said but nobody can say with any conviction that they are performing anywhere near their best at the moment and assuming Newcastle have retained the belief in their ability to live with the top clubs this term, United could find themselves with a serious battle on their hands.

United have won just one of their last five fixtures in all competitions by more than one goal, that a 2-0 victory at home to Otetul Galati in the Champions League and it may pay to take Newcastle in receipt of a

two-goal start with Boylesports at 5-6.

The Magpies are four points adrift of United and lost just once in the Premier League this term.

Against a Manchester United unit unconvincing in their displays of late, Newcastle's cohesion and work-rate could see the visitors spring a surprise.

United are 2-5 to win the match which is absolutely no value whatsoever as Newcastle have conceded just six goals in six away games, three of which were coughed up to City last weekend, two from the penalty spot.

However, Stan James' quote of 10-1 for an away victory is also worth a small investment as some firms offer 7-1.

Elsewhere, Arsenal appear banker material at 4-9 to dispose of Fulham at The Emirates tomorrow evening.

Arsene Wenger's side are over-reliant on Robin van Persie, of that there is no doubt however with or without RVP in the starting line-up against The Cottagers they should still win with a bit in hand.

Match betting quotes of 4-9 are reasonable and back Arsenal giving Fulham a one-goal buffer at a juicy 5-4.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Newcastle United +2:** 2pts 5-6 Boylesports

**Newcastle United:** 0.25pt 10-1 Stan James;

**Arsenal:** 5pts 4-9 generally;

**Arsenal -1:** 2pts 5-4 BLUESQ.

# Tulisa has right to bare arms but we won't be watching

POSSESSING a somewhat upbeat expression by nature — see my byline picture to the right (although when I am watching a sport I have money riding on my face turns purple), people rarely ask me how I am doing.

If they do, it is recognisably small talk, and they just want me to utter "uhm, grand" and move along.

At my first job interview after leaving college I was told to describe myself in three words. I asked if "happy-go-lucky" was one or three words and didn't get the job.

In the canteen at work yesterday, somebody said to me, "How's it going?" and instead of my customary response, I said I was anxious about the unmomentous passage of my undramatic life. "I feel blasé," I explained.

Fortunately, my toast was beginning to burn and I stopped speaking.

Small talk has never been my thing. Or long conversations either really. Snide comments behind the back are more my forte.

Someone I spend a lot of time with these days decided recently she would have to start watching X-Factor to be able to engage in chit-chat at work as she was feeling left out of the main topic of conversation.

Because some loolah will always ask you if you are watching it.

And when you deny it they will say: "Oh, you're one of those!"

"One of what?"

"One of those who secretly watches it but is too much of a snob to admit it."

"I'd rather gouge out my eyes than



Robert O'Shea

## THE LONGSHOT

watch that crap."

"Yeah, right. There's nothing wrong with admitting it."

"Wait. Not my eyes, yours."

The most irritating moment in shows such as X-Factor is surely The Pause. The Pause is there to inject unwarranted drama into an imminent announcement, such as who is being sent home to the sad sack lifestyles they had before they were briefly thrust into the limelight.

Would you put up with such a pause on the Six O'Clock News?

"There was a major flood warning this evening in counties..." Cut to close-up of Bryan Dobson. Cut to Sharon, who bites her bottom lip seductively... "Monaghan and Cavan!"

I wouldn't give a fig about the irritating amateur music show if I hadn't received an email yesterday that screamed: ILL TULISA'S ARM GESTURE BE GIVEN THE AXE?

Although the grammar did confuse me until I realised the first word was meant to be "will", I was intrigued.

Is one of the contestants a neo-nazi?

The e-mail from Boylesports continued: "We are offering 7-4 that X Factor judge Tulisa Contostavlos will not use her regular entrance salute on Sat-

urday's show.

"She is being investigated by Ofcom for her controversial entrances and it is 3-1 she opts for a left-arm salute for Saturday's live show."

Is this woman really performing a "Sieg Heil"?

It continues: "Those that fancy Tulisa to cover up her right arm can get 11-10 with Boylesports that the N-Dubz singer will wear a long-sleeved top."

I would ask someone what is going on but I am too much of a snob.

**Recommendation:** Instead of giving you a tip on a karaoke contest, get on Wymott at 7-1 in the Hennessy Gold Cup with Paddy Power. If you were considering doubling him with Overturn (10-3) in the Fighting Fifth at 34-1, I wouldn't try to convince you otherwise.