

Top fight turns out to be bit of a damp squib

THE MOST anticipated fight of the year took place last weekend at a sold-out Bell Centre in Montreal.

Welterweight kingpin Georges St Pierre defended his long-held title against his vocal nemesis Nick Diaz.

It was Diaz's first fight back after a 12-month suspension. He was suspended after a positive marijuana metabolite was found following his loss to Carlos Condit.

Diaz is one of the true MMA warrior and has a huge fan base due to his exciting fighting style.

Unfortunately seems to be getting more and more bizarre in his media appearances, although entertaining, they have become a little worrying.

He definitely managed to get under St Pierre's skin unlike any other of his former foes.

St Pierre looked visibly rattled throughout the pair's appearances together and it caused one to wonder whether he would come out a bit more recklessly to try and prove a point.

This didn't happen in the Bell Centre and what we were treated to was another flawless, but relatively uninteresting, performance from him.

To be fair, Diaz had opportunities to use his boxing talent, he is probably the best boxer in MMA, but never seemed to get out of first gear.

What resulted was St Pierre controlling the fight and smothering Diaz to win his sixth straight decision in as many fights.

There is no question St Pierre is technically amazing, but personally I have no interest in watching him fight anymore.

As for Diaz, he seems to have lost interest in the sport and has a strange lack of urgency about him these days. He had opportunities in this fight to put the heat on the champ, but didn't take them.

He is now after a re-match, but I don't think he did enough to deserve one.

He has been my favourite fighter



At the MMA Amateur Fight Night 3 were, Áine Ahern, Cathedral Road, Demi Martin, Knocknaheeny, Katie Ahern, Gurranabraher and Tess Craig, Cathedral Road, at the Silver Springs Moran Hotel, Cork.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

MMA

By BEN VICKERS

for a long time, but I'm not sure i want to see him fight until he has sorted his mental demons out.

The co-main event was a number one contender bout to see who would be the next to try and stop St Pierre from laying on them for five rounds.

Carlos Condit had lost to St Pierre last time out and Johnny Hendricks was coming off the back of some awesome KO wins.

Hendricks is a very dangerous proposition as he has top level wrestling coupled with undisputed one punch knockout power.

Condit is one of the most proficient strikers in the game and is known for pushing the pace.

What resulted was a rip roaring battle, both men had success on the feet and Condit showed a cast iron jaw as Hendricks hit him flush on numerous occasions, even potentially breaking his left hand on Condit's face in round two.

Condit pushed on forward and it was even, if Condit was not edging

it, the difference was the wrestling.

Throughout the three rounds, Hendricks scored 13 takedowns and this was enough to sway the balance in the eyes of the judges.

To be honest, Hendricks deserves the title shot as he probably should have been next in line until Diaz talked his way into St Pierre's sights.

I think Hendricks has a chance, St Pierre has been rocked in the past and if he can land clean on the champ's chin, he can end his reign.

The hard part is landing the shot. Also Hendricks has the wrestling to

rival St Pierre's so it makes for an intriguing battle.

Another welterweight bout was the next on the card and Jake Ellenburger also made a statement with an emphatic victory over the hugely experienced Nate Marquardt.

Marquardt has been around the top tier of the sport since the late 90s and has been in with the best and beaten top guys.

Ellenburger has now won eight of his last nine bouts with his only recent loss coming at the hands of the dangerous and highly ranked Martin Kampmann.

Ellenburger has knockout power and he proved this by rendering the tough Marquardt unconscious after three minutes of the first round, becoming the first to stop him in six years.

It was a brutal two-punch combination that dropped Marquardt and a couple of shots on the ground were enough to have him taking a brief nap, leaving the referee no choice but to step in and call a halt.

Ellenburger has been hanging around the top of the welterweight ladder for a while now and another big win may just shove him right up into contention for the title. I would like to see him face the power of Robbie Lawler next as I think they would have a fight of the night scrap.

As it was, Ellenburger pocketed a cool \$50,000 for his performance with Condit and Hendricks also getting the same bonus for fight of the night efforts.

The next UFC card will be held in Sweden on April 6 and the card has a lot of depth.

Headlining is Sweden's own light heavyweight prospect Alexander Gustafsson who will take on Gegard Mousasi in one could well be a fight for the number one contender spot.

The co-main event sees the UK's Ross Pearson welcome Ryan Couture to the octagon, the son of UFC Hall of Famer turned Hollywood superstar Randy.

It is set to be an exciting card and not to be missed.

Weekley bet eclipses annual spring clean and daily nag

WHEN we set out yesterday to advise you the best way to see off slugs, it had nothing at all to do, you understand, with our own appreciation of the slimy creatures.

A certain lady in my life made it clear to me that if any more managed to squeeze their way through my back door, she would be leaving via the front one.

Hence the need for a slug massacre.

If gastropod genocide was the only thing she wanted me to do with regards to odd jobs on the outside of my house, I might now be basking on my couch.

But it seems "getting around to it eventually" no longer holds water (similar to several of my drains) as a

line of argument when it comes to DIY.

I have tried explaining that certain conditions are necessary for me to successfully begin an outdoors project, but these are fobbed off by her hypercritical self as "excuses".

Is it my fault that the decking cleaner box insists its contents not be sprayed on, either after a downpour or if it is threatening to rain?

How often do you come across conditions other than those on this island?

What I insist upon, not unreasonably I have thought, is for a somewhat warm day after two successive dry ones before I tackle leaves and their ilk.

At the weekend I proudly pointed to

Robert O'Shea
THE LONGSHOT

some daffodils that sprout every year from the very limited amount of soil that pockmarks my property.

Could she appreciate this single bolt of buí, that bloomed from the earth in spite of possibly 15 minutes of garden ing that I have performed in six years?

No, she said I should go get some manure.

I exploded. While I could imagine that horse dung does contain some form of fertilising property, did she have any idea where to actually get it? Is it even possible to buy it? At Centra? Or did she want me driving around the country, hopping into a field and following a horse with my shovel, waiting for him to lift his tail? Probably in the rain?

After completely overreacting to my outburst, she gave me four hours of the silent treatment, which she imagines is punishment, but I consider bliss.

It at least gave me some time to look over the field at the Arnold Palmer

Invitational that begins today.

Tiger has seven wins in this event, all of them on Bay Hill and has two wins to back him up this season. But he is 3/1.

While I am surprised Boo Weekley is 100-1 considering he leads the PGA Tour in ball striking and he has three top 25s in six starts at the course, my fancy is Ernie Els, who plays with Woods on the first two days. He is supposed to have a sore hip but he won here in 2010 as well as way back in 1998 and finished in a tie for fourth last year.

Recommendation: Els is 75/1 with Bet365, but I'm going to change my mind here and go back for my shovel and tip Weekley at 100/1 with Boyles.