

**T**HE Airtricity League of Ireland First Division has captured the imagination of the Leaside sporting public more so than ever recently and a victory for Cork City at Turner's Cross tonight will cement their promotion claims.

The penultimate league fixture for City before travelling to Tolka Park next weekend pits Tommy Dunne's team against Longford Town and the layers can only foresee one outcome.

Ladbrokes offer the best odds on a City win, 1-4 however they are as long as 1-7 with William Hill.

The draw, a 6-1 shot with William Hill, will surely not be thought of as value by many while Longford can be backed at 12-1 generally.

A win for City, coupled with a draw (9-4) between Monaghan United (13-8) and Limerick FC (2-1) will put the Rebel Army one point clear of Roddy Collins' unit heading into the final round of games.

However, Shels, 1-7 to leave Salthill Devon with three points tomorrow night, will re-establish themselves as league leaders with an away win in the west and another at home to Finn Harps on Tuesday.

Nevertheless, if events transpire as outlined City will be just two points behind Shels when the sides meet next Friday in Dublin.

Therefore, City, although under a semblance of pressure it must be said, will be expected to go on the offensive tonight to guarantee victory as early in the game as possible.

And anticipating goals might be the best way to making a profit on the match.

City are unbeaten in 12 league encounters, winning 10 and in their last seven they have registered on the scoresheet a remarkable 25 times.

Three, seven, three, five, three and four goals were scored by City in those seven matches and there is every reason to believe they might score at least three times again tonight.

However, Longford, unbeaten in three league meetings, are far from shy in front of goal themselves but yet have not kept a clean sheet for 11 matches.

Interestingly, both teams have scored in nine of Longford's last 11 league games while City's clean sheet away to Salthill Devon, a side Longford drew 1-1 with most recently, was their first in four outings.

Prior to that both teams found the target in City's three games against Waterford United away and both Finn Harps and Monaghan United at home.

These statistics suggest odds of 21-20

# Expect a couple of goals in City's last home tie

**Peter McNamara** considers the best bets for this weekend's top sports fixtures



that sportingbet.com offer about both teams scoring tonight represent value and the most likely route to profit.

Still, as open a contest this could be City should still emerge with maximum points.

As illustrated earlier, finding the net has not been a problem for City and if they remain as ruthless in front of goal it is probable they could win this by a two-goal margin which is worth a bet at odds of 11-4 with Paddy Power.

Also, have a saver on the hosts to win by three goals at 4-1 with the Irish firm.

An entertaining night is in prospect as City play their final game of the season at the Cross.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cork City

v Longford Town Both teams to score 3pts 21-20 sportingbet.com; Cork City to win by two goals 1.5pts 11-4 Paddy Power; Cork City to win by three goals 0.5pt 4-1 Paddy Power. **RUGBY WORLD CUP:** New Zealand are a prohibitive 1-8 with BoyleSports and BETFRED to win Sunday's Rugby World Cup final in regulation time against France and end a 24-year wait to lift the Webb Ellis Cup.

Marc Lievreumont's side could not have been anymore unconvincing en route to this stage of the competition if they tried but their World Cup odyssey might come to an abrupt halt against a Kiwis team that has improved with each passing tournament outing. The critical losses of Dan Carter

and his understudy Colin Slade has only served to galvanise them further and if they produce a repeat performance similar to the one displayed in the semi-final, France will find themselves in serious trouble from the early exchanges onwards.

New Zealand were simply exceptional when beating Australia. The Kiwis brushed the Wallabies aside by 14 points but missed four penalty kicks at goal and had even two of those been converted, a 20-point winning margin or better certainly would not have flattered them.

Remember too France were less than inspiring in pool matches against Canada and Japan, teams the Kiwis tore to pieces and of course the favourites have already beaten the 8-1 match betting outsiders with sportingbet.com in the same pool.

The layers set the handicap mark at 15 points and despite only two of the six previous finals being won by more than that margin, New Zealand possess all the qualities required to become the third in

seven. France will most likely attempt to draw the Kiwis into a dour forwards' battle however if New Zealand make an early breakthrough to settle any pre-match nerves, they could win this with relative ease. Back them to prevail by 16 points or more. **RECOMMENDATION:** New Zealand v France New Zealand -15 2pts 10-11 generally.

**LAST WEEK:** Our two Premier League investments unfortunately failed to return profit with just two goals being scored at Anfield having anticipated over 2.5 goals at 10-11 (2pts) with BoyleSports, while Aston Villa's inability to remain competitive at the Etihad Stadium left us zero from two selections as we had backed the Villains +2 goals at 4-5 (1pt) also with BoyleSports. And things got even worse on Sunday when Castlehaven failed to land ante-post odds of 8-1 to win the Cork County SFC and match and handicap betting investments in the final.

Then again, who did give UCC a cast-iron chance?



Cork City boss Tommy Dunne.

## I'll be like a dog if treble doesn't come up

THEY eat dogs in some cultures. I'm not sure why but perhaps they taste very nice.

Having had a dog as my unofficial best friend for the past nine years (for no one else would I scoop up their excrement from a pavement into a bag — truly the true test of any friendship), I do not see myself chomping down on one no matter how hungry I become or how disrespectful it may seem to my otherwise generous holiday hosts. If dogs were ever to be considered as a legitimate dinner, as a pig or a cow or a chicken is, then the

greyhound will surely be considered fast food. If you think that this is some sort of laboured build-up to a poor joke, then you must be forgetting the case in Dublin around a decade ago where they found greyhound meat in the freezer of a Chinese restaurant.

Now a Chinese restaurant in Doncaster in the UK is this week facing similar rumours, which look like forcing its closure.

One of the stories was that a diner in the restaurant had choked on a microchip from a former racing greyhound.



There is apparently no truth to the allegation, nor to another that a customer found a hare in her chicken and sweetcorn soup. Or that numbers one to six on the menu had the word "trap" placed before them.

Of course, greyhounds' main

function in life is not to end up on a plate with sauce and rice, rather it's to run around in circles so we can have a night out.

The second most prestigious prize in Irish greyhound racing is being held in Curraheen tomorrow night and favourite to win the Laurels for only the second home-town win in the event at the venue, will be Leeview Jet, who is 2-1 with BoyleSports. I'm favouring 5-2 shot at Ladbrokes, Razldazl Rioga, but that is because I like the name. The dog was presented in January to commentator Micheal Ó

Muircheartaigh by the Irish Greyhound Board as recognition of his huge contribution to greyhound racing and sport.

Razldazl George, from the same kennel, triumphed in the derby last month. **RECOMMENDATION:** To build up the price and probably to ensure we are sunk faster than a glass of wine at a Chinese restaurant we just noticed is called Golden Labrador; add France to win the World Cup (8-1 with sporting odds) and City to beat United at 11-4 to Razldazl Rioga (5-2) for a monster price of 115-1.