

Ireland could win it after half time

GIOVANNI Trapattoni's Republic of Ireland are 2-5 to qualify from their Euro 2012 play-off with Estonia and have also been installed as favourites to win the first leg in Tallinn tonight.

Paddy Power and Stan James lay the best available odds on the Republic to book their ticket to next summer's championships however William Hill are even more convinced that Ireland will be in the hat for the draw making them 1-3.

Despite Trapattoni's conservative outlook, especially away from home, the layers still rate Ireland as the more likely side to take a lead into next Tuesday's second leg.

Boylesports have priced up Ireland as 7-5 favourites in the match betting market.

Tonight's hosts are 5-2 with bet365 to win and the draw, the most likely outcome, is an 11-5 shot according to totesport, sportingbet.com and Paddy Power.

The low-scoring nature of their matches in recent times and Ireland's defensive record, just one goal conceded in the last nine, with 15 goals scored in their 10 Group B qualifying campaign games, means the odds-compilers lay just 8-15 about the possibility of less than three goals being scored.

Punters that expect the trend to be bucked tonight can get odds of 6-4 if looking to back over 2.5 goals.

Robbie Keane is the 7-1 market leader in the first goalscorer list with Victor Chandler.



PETER McNAMARA

BETTING

At bigger prices, Aiden McGeady and Damien Duff are on offer at 16-1, Richard Dunne 33-1 and Sean St Ledger 50-1.

In the layers' opinions, the most likely correct score outcomes are 1-1 and a 1-0 away victory for Ireland which can be both backed at 11-2 via The Magic Sign.

Ireland to win 2-1 is a 19-2 poke with UNIBET.com, a 0-0 correct score is 7-1, and Estonia to win 1-0 is viewed as a 7-1 chance generally.

The value however might lie in the half-time/full-time markets.

Ireland are 3-1 to be in front at half-time and win and 40-1 to trail at the break and overturn the deficit in the second-half.

Nevertheless, the possible half-time/full-time outcome that interests us the most is draw/Ireland at 5-1 with UNIBET.com, a bet to be had to minimum stakes.

Trap will have it drummed into his players' heads not to concede or take any chances in the opening half however it is likely that Ireland will be slightly more adventurous after the break.

If they can contain Estonia in the first-half, and realistically they



Punters were ecstatic earlier in the week when Spain were offered at 11-10 to beat England at Wembley. They are the bet of the weekend, and possibly of the month, to demoralise Eng-er-land in their own backyard at 10-11 with most bookies now.

LAST WEEK

A substantial investment was advised on Newcastle United (5pts at 13-10 Stan James) to beat Everton last weekend in the Premier League and the Toon Army duly obliged.

Our only other weekend recommendation from our GAA betting column also copped as Dr Croke's hammered Ballinacourty in the AIB Munster Club SFC quarter-final.

We advised backing the Killarney-based side to cover a four-point spread (3pts at 5-6) against the Waterford representatives.

Our ante-post investment on Dr Croke's being crowned provincial champions (3pts at 11-10) is now as short as 4-9.

the rubbish being spouted in the English press about the loss of Wayne Rooney, even with him in the side the result would be the same.

Interestingly too, England have won just one of their last five at the venue, a clear indication of inhibition in front of their own fans, who, when things go wrong, can get on

their backs.

The Spanish players are a proud bunch and it would irk those playing in La Liga that the Premier League is considered the 'best in the world'.

Spain will attempt to bury England and lay down a marker for Euro 2012.

And when they do we'll be singing all the way to the local bookmakers.

Leinster begin the defence of the Heineken Cup this weekend and are the 5-1 joint-favourites with Toulouse to lift the trophy.

However, the layers are far less enthused about the chances of Munster, Tony McGahan's team 12-1 with sportingbet.com.

But even though they offer the largest price on the Red Army prevailing outright they also lay the best available odds on a Munster victory over Northampton.

Munster are 1-2, Saints 2-1 and 20-1 the draw.

RECOMMENDATIONS

● Estonia v Ireland: Draw/Ireland, 0.75pt, 5-1 UNIBET.com; Draw/draw 0.25pt 4-1 generally.

● England v Spain: Spain 5pts 10-11 Boylesports, Ladbrokes, William Hill.

Munster can find the space for a diamond performance

TRAWLING through online betting websites last night I came across odds on who would be the next housemate to leave Big Brother.

Do they still televise that show?

Or is there a house somewhere in Britain where the people inside have been told they are being broadcast live to the outside world, but the cameras stopped rolling a long time ago.

Let's hope so.

Taking being cooped up with the same humans to another level last week were the six cosmonauts who emerged after 520 days from a simulated mission to Mars in a Russian car park.

The experiment, which took place in an isolation module, was hailed as a successful step forward in space exploration, especially for drivers who entered the car park looking for a space.

After having some trouble leaving the car park because they had failed to validate their ticket, the six men spoke on Wednesday of the intense boredom they had to endure, which seasoned followers of Ireland's Euro 2012 qualifying campaign can empathise with.

Russia wants to get to Mars by 2040 although its space programme has been beset by difficulties and they have not entered deep space in more than two



Robert O'Shea

THE LONGSHOT

decades.

William Hill offer odds of 20-1 on a manned mission landing on Mars before 2020 and 50-1 that the first trip there comes after 2030.

They go 50-1 on 2020-24 and 66-1 on 2025-2029.

If you were willing to wait over 29 years to be paid out, that first 50-1 looks the most likeliest if you think a human foot will ever touch down on the red planet.

For a quicker payout, we have Heineken Cup action tomorrow.

Munster come into this season's competition after missing out on the quarters for the first time in 10 years.

Tomorrow they face last year's finalists Northampton.

This one's set up for a great Munster performance and the 10-11 that Boylesports offer on them to win on a -4 handicap should be taken.

Leinster will have to do without Brian O'Driscoll for the campaign, so the 2-1 that PaddyPower offer on Munster outstaying them in the competition is also worth looking at (Ulster can't be ruled out of this betting at 10-1, despite a very difficult group).

Don't rule out Italian teams springing a few surprise results at big prices this season either.

Recommendation: Munster are worth taking on the handicap, but the price might be a bit restrictive for a bumper weekend, so instead take Diamond Harry at 8-1 for the Betfair Chase in Haydock tomorrow.

SEE TOMORROW'S EVENING ECHO FOR TWO PAGES OF BÓRD NA nÓG NOTES AND REPORTS