

McGregor claims win in a sensational debut

AFTER a short hiatus, the UFC returned last weekend to the beautiful Ericsson Globe Arena in Sweden.

An Irishman stole the show, Conor McGregor looked like a UFC veteran and laughed in the face of octagon jitters.

The whole UFC experience didn't faze the up and coming star and he oozed charisma all the way through fight week.

He didn't lack any style when he entered the octagon either, he looked cool, calm, collected and deadly.

He landed punches from all angles and even threw some wild capoeira style kicks.

He took a couple of clean shots on the chin too, all this happened in under a minute and then came the end.

McGregor landed a couple of hard uppercuts that spelled the beginning of the end, Marcus Brimage didn't know what had hit him and when he was face down on the canvas McGregor went in for the kill, the referee had seen enough and so ended one of the finest UFC debuts ever.

In his post fight interview McGregor implored Dana White to award him the KO of the night bonus and the boss was forthcoming. McGregor was beaming in his post fight interview saying that he would be off the dole now he had a bit of cash in his pocket.

One thing is for sure, a star was born and stole the show.

It was a good night for the UK with the ever exciting Brad Pickett winning himself yet another fight of the night bonus against Mike Easton. More importantly he put himself back into the title picture and maybe one last shot at UFC gold.

Pickett is in his mid thirties and has been involved in many wars so may not have too much longer left at the top level, although I'm sure he will continue to be well matched, even if he's not in title contention as he brings the action and fans can't get enough of his style.

Credit has to go to Easton too. He



Ireland's Conor McGregor leaves the cage after defeating Marcus Brimage of the US in the Ultimate Fighting Championship UFC Gala at the Globe Arena in Stockholm, Sweden on Saturday. Picture: AFP Photo

MMA

By BEN VICKERS

stood in the pocket, which is rare in MMA, and went blow for blow with the hard-punching Brit.

That's two losses in a row for Easton, but it would be harsh for him to get the chop on the back of such an exciting fight.

It takes two to make a war and Easton was more than happy to oblige.

Another successful British fighter was Ross Pearson who gave Ryan Couture a tough welcome to UFC.

Couture looked to be doing ok in round one, but Pearson showed maturity in waiting for his time to come. He look refreshed back at lightweight after a short spell at feather.

Two things Pearson possesses are power and a killer instinct. He showed both of these when despatching Couture in devastating fashion in round 2.

The most impressive aspect of this performance was the maturity and patience of Pearson, he probably lost round 1, but showed no signs of panic and got the job done.

The main event was the victim of

the injury crisis. Local hero Alexander Gustafsson was pulled from the fight with a cut sustained in his last sparring session, fortunately Gegard Mousasi was still able to make his UFC debut against Ilir Latifi.

Mousasi played it pretty safe and won a comfortable decision and it turns out he needs knee surgery so fair play to him for still taking the fight. It was a highly entertaining show and one just hopes the TUF 17 card this weekend is just as good.

Also last weekend there was a big show in Dublin with lots of Cork boys representing on Man Of War 6. In the main event head MMA coach

of the MMA Clinic in Cork Nick Laney looked unstoppable in his ground and pound destruction of Sylvester ..

The honorary Corkman was brutal in his first round performance. His opponent had very little answer to Laney's clinical ground work. The referee stopped the bout after multiple unanswered shots.

The MMA Clinic's Kieran O'Brien despatched Dublin's Tommy Martin on route to the amateur featherweight title. O'Brien won round one pretty comfortably and then in round two he turned it up and had Martin badly hurt and covering up against the cage. Martin did well not to go down under the onslaught but the referee was right to save him from further punishment.

Sean O'Donovan of Sean Scoil in Cork also had a good win via huge slam and then mounted ground and pound.

Rocking old school GAA shorts the Cork man looked stylish as well as excellent in his victory.

The last Cork boy out was Cian Smith and he completed a Cork city whitewash in the capital.

Smith used his superior wrestling to control all three rounds of the fight.

Coming into the third round his opponent, Fran McKeown, knew he needed a knock out for the win and he came out looking for it. Smith was able to take it and force the submission at just under two minutes of the final stanza.

A very impressive performance and a great night for Cork MMA.

MMA in general in Ireland is in a great place right now and I don't see it being long before there is another Conor McGregor type representing Cork MMA on the big stage.

Get into swing of things with Double Double or Double D

WHEN I hit 18 and possibly a bit before that I began to ignore my parents' sage advice never to talk to strangers.

And while it has often led me down the darker corridors of random existences, some encounters can be enlightening enough to make up for the usual doom and gloom (A South African rugby player whose name escapes me once said: "Don't tell people your troubles; if they want to hear them they are probably glad you have them.")

Often, the more seemingly confrontational the first few words exchanged, the better the eventual conversation.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that I like talking to grumpy people I don't know.

One such recent conversation with a gentleman enjoying his middle years had barely begun when it veered towards the US Masters and who would win it and the conclusions drawn were seen in yesterday's published tips.

I was next asked if I played golf myself and I humbly replied I'd been out in WaterRock that week and sunk a few putts for the first time in over a year.

The inquiry was parried back.

"Golf has replaced sex in my life," came the reply. No further prodding was needed here either and the man was soon galloping off to the reasons why this had come to pass.

"Firstly, your golf partner will never say: 'What? We just golfed last week! Is



Robert O'Shea

THE LONGSHOT

that all you ever think about?"

"And nobody expects you to give up golfing just because your partner loses interest in the game. No one expects you to promise to golf with just one partner for the rest of your life. It's perfectly respectable to golf with a total stranger

"If you are having trouble with golf, it is also acceptable to pay a professional

to show you how to improve your technique.

"You don't have to sneak your golf magazines into the house.

"And finally, nobody will tell you that you'll go blind if you play by yourself."

That was the gist of it anyway.

Still being of an age where I crave pursuits that require your legs to be further apart than when addressing a tricky three-footer, I will today look at the odds on who will become sexiest woman in the world.

FHM magazine first awarded this honour in 1995 to German model Claudia Schiffer and will announce the winner this month. Georgia



Salpa (left) is considered a 9/1 shot with Paddy Power after finishing fifth last year.

American born-Ukraine actress Mila Kunis is vying for the top spot with model Kate Upton, both at 15/8, with Coronation Street actress Michelle Keegan straggling behind at 2/1.

We're often asked if the only reason we print these odds is so we can include a picture of the immaculately shaped Salpa? Guess.

Recommendation: Salpa at 9/1 to be the sexiest woman in the world. If your interest in such sexy matters is minimal, take Double Double (5/1) in the 7.10 at Limerick tonight.