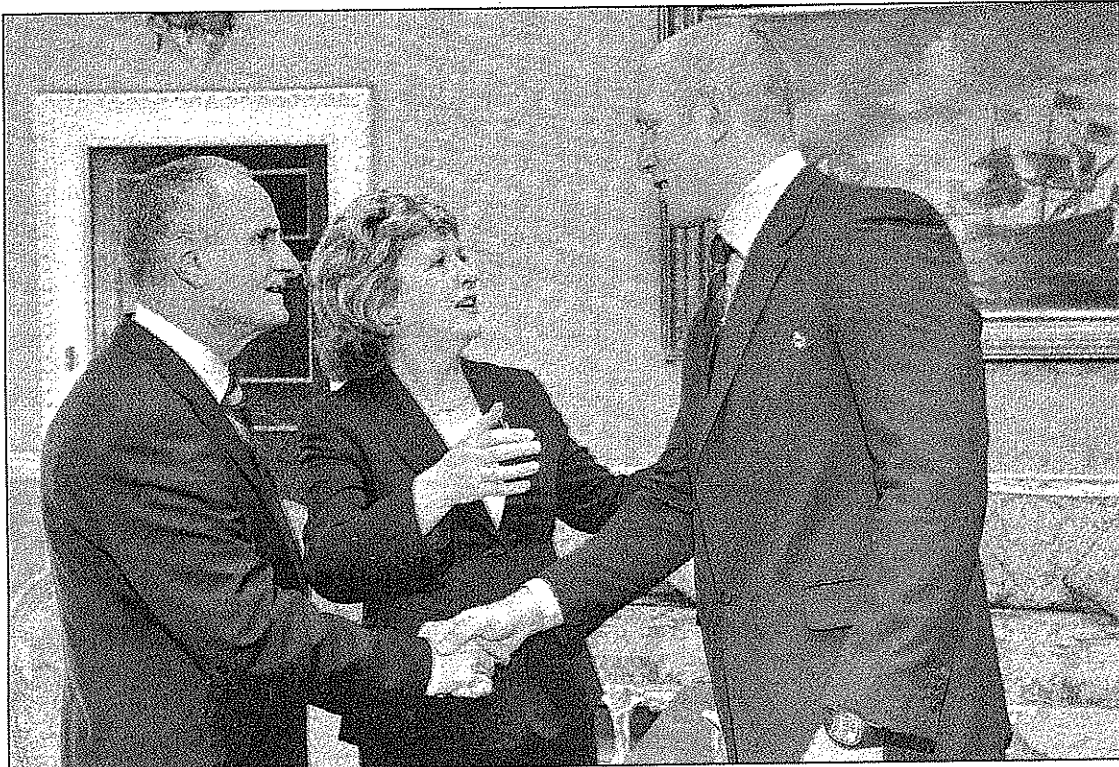
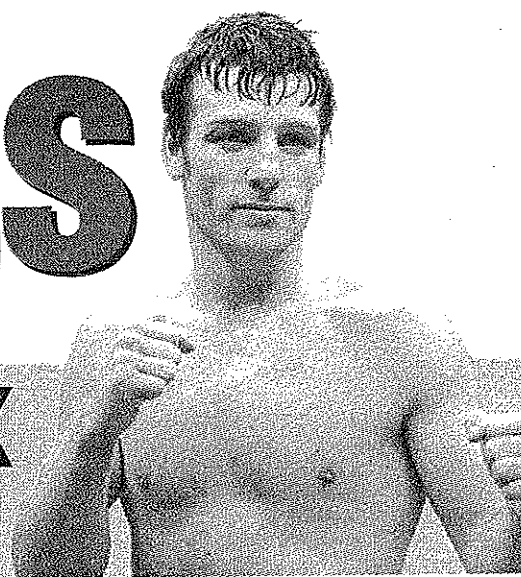


EchoSports

April 22-28, 2009

DUDDY FIGHTS IN NEWARK

Burns spurns Manfredo challenge - See Page 39



Munster and Lions' captain Paul O'Connell was greeted Monday by President Mary McAleese and her husband Dr. Martin McAleese when Ireland's Grand Slam-winning team visited Áras an Uachtaráin. SPORTSFILE

RUGBY IN EUROPE

O'Connell to lead Lions in S.A., one of 14 Irish picked

By Mark Jones
letters@irishecho.com

IRELAND turned out to be the dominant force when the Lions rugby squad for the upcoming tour to South Africa was announced on Tuesday. Paul O'Connell was named as captain ahead of teammate and national captain, Brian O'Driscoll, while as many as 14 Irish players were included in the 37-man party.

While not currently captaining his country, O'Connell was rewarded for the superb leadership job he has done with Munster, and was obviously regarded as a more suitable candidate than O'Driscoll, who led the Lions in New Zealand in 2005.

The surprise selections were 21-year-old center Keith Earls, who didn't figure during Ireland's Grand Slam campaign, and Munster veteran, Alan Quinlan, who has been in superb form for the province of late.

John Hayes, Marcus Horan, Gordon D'Arcy and Paddy Wallace were the only players who appeared in the recent Six Nations championship who failed to make the squad.

"To be selected for a second Lions tour is fantastic, and to be asked to captain the squad is a tremendous honor," said 29-year-old O'Connell. "It's not only a great honor for me, but an honor for Munster and Ireland."

He added that taking on the reigning world

champions in their own back yard would be a huge challenge, but he was confident that there was the necessary talent and attitude for success.

"Paul O'Connell has shown over his career that he's a natural leader both on and off the field," said head coach, Ian McGeechan. "He has the respect of his fellow players all over the world."

With the Irish leading the way with a record 14 representatives - including eight from Munster - Wales have 13 players, England eight and Scotland just two.

The 10-match tour begins on May 30, and features three test matches against the Springboks on June 20, June 27 and July 4. The last time the Lions toured South Africa in 1997, they won the test series 2-1.

Ireland's Lions:

Backs: Rob Kearney, Luke Fitzgerald, Tommy Bowe, Brian O'Driscoll, Keith Earls, Ronan O'Gara, Tomas O'Leary

Forwards: Jerry Flannery, Donnacha O'Callaghan, Paul O'Connell (capt), Alan Quinlan, Stephen Ferris, David Wallace, Jamie Heaslip.

63.8 p.c. is not enough

HAMSTRUNG by its own democracy, the GAA failed to adopt new measures aimed at cleaning up its games at last weekend's annual congress in

See SPORTS, Page 38

BOXING IN AMERICA

O'Sullivan win 3rd Gloves title

By Jay Mwamba
letters@irishecho.com

Ruth O'Sullivan halted a bloodied but brave Jillkerry Ward in the fourth round to win her third New York Daily News Golden Gloves title at Madison Square Garden's WaMu Theater last Friday night.

A steady barrage of shots to Ward's crimson face in the all-Irish scrap forced a stoppage of the women's 106-pound final at 1:35 minutes of the final stanza, earning O'Sullivan her third Gloves championship in five years.

Ward, a Manhattan model/actress whose father emigrated from County Kerry, won silver for the second time. Both fighters received a bye to the final because of the low entry in the 106-pound division.

O'Sullivan, who's 33 and was representing Gleason's Gym, thanked trainer Devon Cormack for the win and said their hard work had paid off.

"I felt good the all day, relaxed and awesome and nothing held me back," the petite Dubliner said after her brutal victory.

Although ring rusty in her first competitive fight since losing in the 2007 final, Ward was able and willing to take punishment from the 2005 and 2006 titlist for most of the fight.

After a slow and sluggish opening round for both fighters, Sullivan got to business following a wake up call from Ward in the form of a solid right hand.

She opened up with a fusillade of punches that bloodied Ward's nose and forced the referee to give the Trinity B.C. fighter the first of three standing-eight counts. The other counts came in the third and four rounds.

O'Sullivan couldn't miss with a steady flow of straight lefts and rights and despite her "Ruthless Ruth" moniker, felt that the referee should have stopped the bout earlier.



Ruth O'Sullivan. SPORTSFILE

"I felt sorry for [Ward]. I really felt bad for her but she coming at me so it was not her," O'Sullivan said. "Her I was all over me and I thought the referee would stop it a couple of times. She has a lot of heart."

While Ward kept fighting back, her punches, according to O'Sullivan, lacked steam.

Cormack was happy with Sullivan's performance. "She did a good job and could have done it sooner," he said. "I'd liked her to [throw] more shots."

On her future plans, O'Sullivan said she'd take things day at a time.

KERRY WINS

In the women's 132-pound final on Thursday night, Anne Kerry [Mendez Becerra] outpointed Gleason's Claretta Retamozzo 5-0 to win her Gloves title.

HOROWITZ SCHOLARS

Teddy Atlas, the ESPN b

See BOXING, Page 39



Echo Sports

Duddy takes on durable Lyell in Newark

Ahead of John Duddy's ten-rounder with Billy Lyell in Newark this Friday, the Derry Destroyer's trainer fended off a challenge from super middleweight Peter Manfredo for a showdown with his Irish charge.

"I [won't] even give it a second thought," trainer Pat Burns said in Miami last Sunday before adding:



Boxing Roundup
Jay Mwamba
letters
@irishecho.com

"What does Peter Manfredo do for John Duddy? John Duddy is the top draw in this country and Europe. John puts a lot

of [people] in seats. We're going to worry about this [Lyell] fight first."

Manfredo, a 28 year-old stopped in three rounds by now retired Welsh great Joe Calzaghe in Cardiff two years ago, called out Duddy after starring Walid Smichet in seven heats in Montreal, Canada, last Saturday.

Smichet is the Tunisian middleweight who gave the undefeated Duddy fits 14 months ago. He busted up the Derry Destroyer and dashed what was a guaranteed seven-figure payday for Duddy against world champ Kelly Pavlik, despite dropping a ten-round decision.

"I'm a top-level performer who only had three weeks to get ready for this fight," said the 36-6 [16 KOs] Manfredo after destroying Smichet.

"I'm coming down to middleweight and I want Duddy. Today, I did what he couldn't do and plan on being ringside Friday night for his fight [against Lyell]."

In Miami, Duddy shrugged off Manfredo's proposed presence at the Prudential Center.



John Duddy celebrated victory over Howard Eastman in Belfast in December 2007.

"I couldn't care less," said Duddy [26-0, 17 KOs].

He said he was fit and ready to explode against Lyell, who at age 24 and 5-foot-nine is five years younger and two inches shorter than him. But Duddy insisted that he wouldn't be under any pressure to blow out an opponent with a well-earned reputation for durability.

"I'll just concentrate on what I've been working on," Duddy remarked.

Burns, a former Marine, gave Duddy the thumbs up. "We had a great [training] camp and I'm very happy with John's conditioning."

Given Lyell's ability to take a punch, conditioning should be of the essence for Duddy as he re-establishes his credentials to challenge Pavlik.

Lyell [18-7, 3 KOs] is a modest, albeit busy, puncher who's likely to play catcher all night. And unless Duddy goes flat out in search of a KO, the fight could add up to a good ten round workout for the Derryman.

On the undercard, former world junior middleweight Kassim Ouma tackles light middleweight Gabriel Rosado, the Philadelphia boxer who handed Aklow's James Moore his first pro defeat in New York last June.

Tickets for the show are available from Barney Moore at (917) 559-8467 and Greg McIntyre at (917) 528-7379.

LEE SIGHTING

Andy Lee was in New York last weekend en route to his Detroit base after nearly a month in Ireland following his ten round points victory

over German Alex Sipos.

The Limerick middleweight will soon be off to camp with trainer-manager Emanuel Steward and stablemate Wladimir Klitschko who defends his world heavy-weight crown against Englishman David Haye in Germany on June 20.

Lee said he'd most likely return to the ring a week or so after the Klitschko-Haye bout.

McDERMOTT FIGHT DATE

Jersey City super featherweight Danny McDermott [7-1-1, 2 KOs] faces tough Philly brawler Gustavo Dailey at the Schuetzen Park Ballroom in North Bergen on May 7.

The Irish American Center



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9 a.m.

Cork v. Monaghan

11 a.m.

Kerry v. Derry

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NTRANSIT
The Way To Go

Boxing

Continued from Page 40

analyst and trainer who's worked with several Irish fighters, presented the Dr. Theodore A. Atlas Foundation's George Horowitz Scholarship to Long Island amateur Xavier Navas during the finals on Thursday night.

The \$5,000 scholarship honors the memory of the former Everlast CEO who was a benefactor and board member of the foundation Atlas established in 1997 to honor his late father. The award goes to a boxer who demonstrates the desire, determination and need to further themselves through higher education.

Navas, who lost in the preliminaries, is a junior at Stony Brook University.

"George used his position and the company of Everlast to help the Foundation's many causes and when he died we had to remember his spirit," said Atlas, who traces his maternal roots to County Cavan.