

Cork Strikers Back, But With No Boss

CARETAKER John Considine has refused to take on the Cork manager's role on a long-term basis after Gerald McCarthy quit as boss amid death threats last week.

As reported in the last week's *Irish Voice*, McCarthy quit on Tuesday night of last week after a meeting with the 2009 squad in Mallow.

The 2008 panel ended their strike when they made themselves available for training on Tuesday night of this week, but McCarthy's resignation and his reasons have left a bitter taste for all concerned.

In a lengthy and hard hitting statement McCarthy said, "I cannot continue to expect a family even as supportive as mine to withstand that pressure and possibly to put their own safety at risk."

"A few days ago, my father who is in his mid-eighties, pleaded with me to step down after one of my sons, in my absence abroad, received the latest threat against me."

"The threat against my life, which has been referred to the Gardai, is the latest in a sequence of threats and abuse, random or organized I do not know, which I and my family members have had to endure over the past few months."

"Given the kind of vitriol at recent public meetings and indeed in some media commentary, it is hardly surprising that thugs have attached themselves to the 'cause' of the 2008 hurlers."

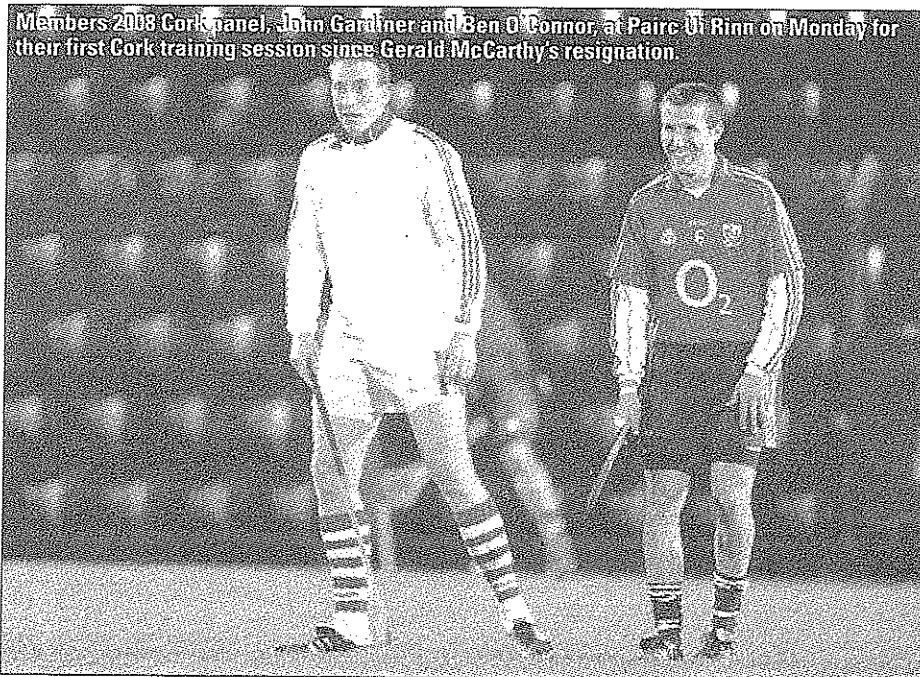
"I am not, as some would have it, resigning 'for the good of Cork hurling.' In fact, and without being presumptuous, I would regard my resignation in the current circumstances as being detrimental to Cork hurling in the long term."

"I am quite confident that after two overwhelming endorsements, a third vote would not have removed me at County Board level."

"However, only my resignation, apparently, will allow the best group of Cork hurlers to take the field. While the latter objective is very desirable, that outcome should not be confused with the future health of Cork hurling or its direction in the coming years."

"Hurlers should not have the right to appoint their own manager, veto the appointment of a man-

Members 2008 Cork panel, John Gardiner and Ben O'Connor, at Pairc Uí Rinn on Monday for their first Cork training session since Gerald McCarthy's resignation.



ager, interview their own manager or pursue commercial interests at the expense of the broader GAA family."

"My greatest disappointment is to have to leave the current team and the selectorial and backroom team who have been outstanding, honorable, steadfast and at all times motivated by the highest of values."

Meanwhile, under-21 boss Considine, along with Jim Cashman, Tony O'Sullivan, Denis Ring and Paddy Daly, will take charge of the Cork team for their league games with Clare and Limerick, with a full-time manager to be appointed at the end of March.

Cork football boss Conor Counihan welcomed the end game after his side beat Laois in the NFL at the weekend.

Counihan said, "There's no doubt it was a distraction and you could see that last week. Hopefully it's behind us now. We've a tough run-in but we're looking forward to being tested and see what we have got."

"The Laois win was an improvement on last week. The reality is that we didn't play well last week and we looked for an improvement on that performance and we got it, to a certain extent. It was good reaction."

"We'd be conscious of needing to vary it and try different things during the league. The point scoring was good, maybe we could have got a goal as well but at least we were creating them. It's a great day with the under-21s winning well also."

McMahon Out

TYRONE defender Justin

McMahon is to miss the rest of the NFL campaign with a hamstring injury picked up in his team's last gasp win over Westmeath in Mullingar last Sunday.

All-star midfielder Enda McGinley also picked up a hamstring injury in the win and will miss this weekend's fixture against Donegal.

A late, late Colm Cavanagh goal rescued Tyrone in Mullingar and manager Mickey Harte admitted, "We did get out of jail at the end, no doubt about it, but I suppose it's never over until the fat lady sings and she didn't sing until late on today."

"I think we had a very good first half and it probably wasn't reflected on the scoreboard. We should have been further ahead at half-time."

"Westmeath played the better football in the second half. Denis Glennon's goal gave them a lot of confidence. We clawed that back with points but then, when Westmeath got the second goal, with about three or four minutes to go, you would have thought that was a match-winning score."

"On reflection, maybe they took their foot off the pedal a little bit. I think it showed what our boys are made of, that they didn't give up."

Dubs Beaten

DUBLIN boss Pat Gilroy was under no illusions after his team were beaten by Derry in the NFL at Parnell Park last Saturday night.

"Derry were very good," the Dublin manager said after a five point defeat. "I'd say they were without doubt the strongest team we played so far in terms

of performance."

"They worked so hard all over the pitch. They did a lot of things that we would like to be doing and they were clinical up front."

"Defensively, we weren't good tonight and that was all over the pitch. We were either giving away frees or we weren't getting to the ball."

"On a positive note, we did better in the shooting stakes today. We didn't have that many chances and yet we scored 1-12. And the good thing from my perspective was that we didn't lie down when we went so far behind."

"We still came back and got it back to five and maybe we could have got another goal, but to the fair to them, our guys don't lie down."

Galway Wins

MICHAEL Meehan was the star of the show with a personal tally of 1-9 as Galway maintained their recent impressive NFL form with a win over Donegal in Salthill.

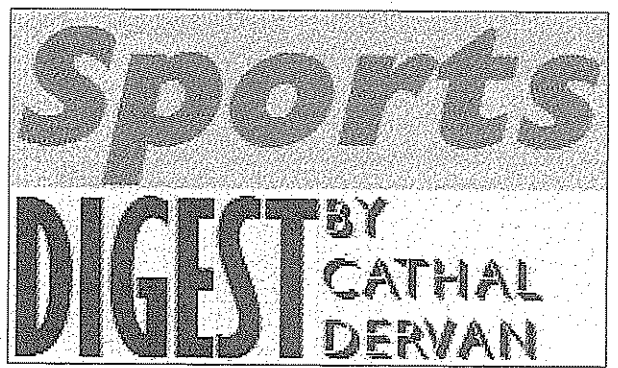
"He seems to produce a different display each day, one better than the next. He did very well for us, particularly in the opening half," manager Liam Sammon said afterwards.

Donegal manager John Joe Doherty admitted: "We were just not able to handle Michael Meehan in the opening half."

"We struggled to match Galway's physicality and that left us coming from a long way back. But we will take the positives out of the game and the second half display was important for us."

GAA Shorts

THE Wexford hurlers have suffered another blow



with the news that forward Barry Lambert has been ruled out of this summer's championship after a shoulder operation...

CROSSMAGLEN star Francie Bellow could announce his retirement from inter-county football after the All-Ireland club final date with Kilmacud Crokes...

KERRY were left to count the cost of Sunday's narrow NFL win over Mayo in Tralee when midfielder Marc O Se picked up a knee injury...

THE Gaelic Players Association has started a campaign to save the Players Grant Scheme now under threat from government cutbacks...

HURLING: Leinster proved too strong for Connacht in the martin Donnelly Inter Provincial hurling final in Abu Dhabi last Saturday...

TYRONE will not appeal Ryan McMenamin's eight-week suspension any further.

Walsh Stars

In Cheltenham

RUBY Walsh was the star of the show as he bagged an incredible seven winners and the Irish took nine races at the 2009 Cheltenham Festival.

Top of the pile for Walsh as he retained his leading jockey title was the Gold Cup winner Kauto Star, who became the first horse ever to regain the famous trophy last Friday.

Walsh has now won more races at the one festival than any other jockey and is just one winner overall behind Pat Taaffe, who guided 25 horses to victory at Prestbury Park between 1954 and 1970.

"It's unbelievable, I hope I don't wake up and it's Tuesday morning," said Walsh after Kauto Star's victory.

"It's been an incredible week, everything's gone right. Paul Nicholls' horses were flying, Willie Mullins' horses were flying and I've been lucky enough to be riding for the

two of them."

"I've been on the right horses which usually isn't the case, everything's gone right and from the time Celestial Halo got chained in the Champion Hurdle we haven't looked back."

Walsh reserved special praise for Kauto Star after a 13-length victory over Denman.

"I think he was the one horse that everyone wanted to win," said Walsh.

"Racing wanted him to win, maybe it was a split with Denman again - he's such a wonderful horse as well - but he's an incredible horse and he got an incredible reception."

Dunne Deal

BERNARD Dunne is 100% convinced he will silence those who doubt his world title credentials when he finally realizes his lifelong dream on Saturday night.

Some 24 years after his Olympian dad Brendan first introduced him to the ring, Dunne will climb through the ropes for the toughest fight and the biggest night of his life.

Panama's reigning world superbantamweight champion Ricardo Cordoba awaits with the belt firmly attached to his waist.

"This is the right thing for me to do and it is the right time for me," insisted Dunne.

"Physically I am ready, mentally I am ready and only for the Kiko Martinez defeat I would have boxed for a world title by now."

"After that defeat it was rebuilding myself as a boxer and rebuilding people's faith in me. I've done that and I am ready now for the world title challenge."

"Of course it is going to be tough. There are very few poor world champions out there, they don't make it easy for you to win a world title."

"It is a risk fighting the belt holder but what am I supposed to do, sit around and wait for a one armed world champion to fight?"