

# Duddy Ready for Next Challenge

By Declan O'Kelly

JOHN Duddy (26-0) will fight Billy Lyell (18-7, 3 KOs) at the Prudential Center in Newark on April 24 in a 10 round fight. The Derry native only had a couple of weeks off after his win over Matt Vanda at Madison Square Garden on February 21, and will head straight to Miami to prepare for this latest challenge with trainer Pat Burns.

The 29-year-old officially announced the fight at Legends Bar, which is also sponsoring him on the night, in midtown Manhattan on St. Patrick's Day. Duddy, just back from a two-week vacation, is eager to get back in the ring.

"I'm looking forward to an exciting fight, but not too exciting a fight!" said Duddy at the press conference.

Lyell is from Ohio and lives in Youngstown, the same place that Kelly Pavlik

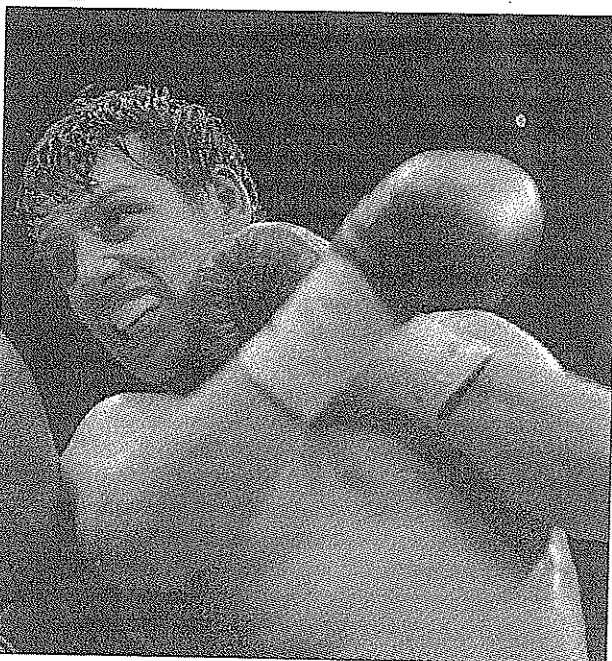
calls home. The two share the same trainer, Jack Loew.

The unbeaten Irishman is far too experienced to take anyone for granted at this stage in his career.

"If he prepares anything like Kelly does then I know he will be 110% percent ready for the fight," continued Duddy.

With an 18-7 record, the 24-year-old Lyell has journeyed a bit since his debut in July 2003. However, only three knockout victories in his career suggest that Duddy's chin should not be tested too much on April 24.

Lyell is just coming off a defeat to Vanes Martirosyan on February 7 and is 5-5 for his last 10 fights. The most recognizable names on his ledger are defeats to Luis Ramon Campas by unanimous decision in June 2007, a TKO loss to James Kirkland in February 2007 and a TKO loss to Charles Whittaker in September 2006.



John Duddy.

In other news, Andy Lee (16-1) will fight Alexander Sipos (19-5-2) this Saturday night on the undercard of the Bernard Dunne/Ricardo Cordoba WBA super bantamweight title fight at the O2 Arena in Dublin.

Lee was meant to headline the Erin Go Brawl II card at the WaMu Theater

in Madison Square Garden on March 16, but promoters Irish Ropes cancelled the card because of poor ticket sales.

The 24-year-old arrived in Dublin last Saturday ahead of the fight and is quite familiar with his German opponent, having sparred with him during a training

camp he attended with Vladimir Klitschko in Austria last year.

"It's an interesting matchup because Sipos gave a very good account of himself when he challenged for the European title in Finland. A few people at ringside believe he should have got the verdict but it went the hometown fighters way," said promoter Brian Peters of the match made by Tomas Rohan.

"I think Andy proved last time out in Limerick though just how good a fighter he is when he stopped Willie Gibbs. If we get half as good a fight at the O2 next weekend it will lift the roof off the place and really whet the appetite for the main event."

Sipos has lost his last three fights but is a durable opponent who should provide Lee with a good challenge considering the short notice at which the fight was made.

Patrick Hyland (16-0, 8

KOs) defeated Carlos Guevara (12-9-2, 9 KOs) by unanimous decision to win the IBA international super featherweight title in Dorchester last Saturday night. Hyland won comfortably on the judges' scorecards, 98-92, 98-92, 99-91.

On the same undercard Cork light middleweight Gary "Spike" O'Sullivan (7-0, 5 KOs) won against Jimmy LeBlanc (12-16-4, 4 KOs) when his opponent was disqualified for continuous clenching in the fourth round.

James Moore will make his return to the ring on May 8 on a Bob Duffy promoted card at Plattduetsche Park Restaurant in Franklin Square, Long Island.

The Wicklow native has been keeping in shape since his defeat to Yuri Foreman in December and will fight in an eight round contest. An opponent for the fight has not been confirmed.

## Macklin Makes the Grade

By Declan O'Kelly

MATTHEW Macklin (24-2) produced a sensational performance to overpower Wayne Elcock in three rounds at the Aston Events Center in Birmingham to become the new British middleweight champion on Saturday night.

Macklin, whose parents are from Tipperary and Roscommon and who has represented Tipperary in hurling at all levels except senior, entered the ring in green and gold trunks.

Macklin and Elcock sized each other up in the first round, and the 35-year-old champion might have taken the stanza on the judges' cards, even though it seemed Macklin was the more aggressive.

In round two Macklin forced the pace and landed a triple jab right combination that alerted Elcock to his power, easily taking the round in the process.

In round three that power told when an overhand right had Elcock in all kinds of

trouble. Elcock buckled to the canvas after Macklin's subsequent charge.

Though Elcock beat the count, Macklin was in for the kill and referee Victor Loughlin stopped the contest at 0:59 left in the round.

"I have been frustrated and I have had a few setbacks, but I think everyone will agree that that was a pretty spectacular performance. I am now British champion and I am very proud," said Macklin after the fight.

## Portumna, Kilmacud Win

By Declan O'Kelly

PORTUMNA defeated De La Salle by 2-24 to 1-8 in a lopsided All-Ireland senior club hurling final on St. Patrick's Day at Croke Park. In doing so, the Galway side retained the title they won 12 months ago and extended the misery for Waterford teams in All-Ireland finals.

Like the county team's capitulation to Kilkenny in the All-Ireland Final last September, De La Salle were out of this contest well before halftime. Portumna's man of the match Damien Hayes bagged two goals and Joe

Canning chipped in with frees to see the Galway men lead 2-11 to 0-3 at the interval.

Though De La Salle was more competitive in the second half, the result was never in doubt and there were 19 points between the teams when the final whistle went. Portumna have now won three of the last four All-Ireland club hurling titles, and the latest victory reinforces their claim to being one of GAA's all-time great club hurling teams.

In the football decider that immediately followed the hurling, the men of

Crossmaglen were trying to enhance their own dynasty.

The 2007 champions from Armagh were hoping to add a fifth title, but it was not to be, however, as Kilmacud Crokes of Dublin won by 1-09 to 0-7.

Mark Davoran got the crucial goal after ten minutes and the team from the capital lead by 1-04 to 0-4 at half-time. Mark Vaughan scored four points for the champions and try as Crossmaglen did to breach Kilmacud's defense at the death, the Dublin men stood firm and won the title for the second time.

## Dowd Leads Walk in the Park

By Eugene Kyne

New York 5-15 Clonard, Wexford 0-4

GARY Dowd sprang from the bench to join with John Goldrick as the main scorers to lead New York to an easy win over their visitors from across the pond this past Sunday.

Despite Wexford's best effort New York were always in cruise control in this contest. On a beautiful day for football with St. Patrick's Day already on people's minds, it was a small pit stop to get the cobwebs off before the festivities began.

Challenge games are always a tremendous boost for New York in their build up to the Connaught Championship, and certainly last Sunday's was a plus against the travelling Clonard squad. The opportunity to play against different players instead of intra squad battles helps immensely.

The contest on Sunday was over, however, within 10 minutes when New York had already chipped in with 1-3 to no score, with Johnny Goldrick firing to the net when he was set free by Conor Brady and Francie Cleary.

Despite a point from Tommy Hynes for the Wexford club, again New York attacked with a further goal from Goldrick and points from Cleary and an advancing Patsy Martin. It gave New York a 2-5 to 0-1 lead, but certainly they were not firing on all cylinders.

Clonard attacked on four occasions, but timely interceptions by Eoghan Kyne, Alan Rafferty and Joe Bell kept them at bay. They did have their second point when New York were lax in allowing a short free to find Shane Keogh, who rifled a point over the lathe.

The stateside lads replied with four points before intermission that gave them a 2-8 to 0-2 lead at the break.

With eight subs getting in to the game for New York on the resumption, it was a changed side. Tomo Smith immediately made his presence felt with a trademark classic goal to get the final 30 minutes rolling.

Damien Donovan had an excellent point in reply, but it was the calm before the storm. After another Tomo score, this time a beautiful point, the contest became the Gary Dowd show.

The New York veteran

who is normally deployed in the center of the field was stationed on the square when he arrived from the bench. Between the fifth and 13th minutes he fired home 2-1 that sandwiched a Declan Reilly point.

Both goals were rifled low to the net with clinical panache, the first when Alan Rafferty stormed forward and linked with Justin O'Halloran, the second after a feed from Reilly. Points from Thomas McGovern, Adrian O'Connor and Dowd again finished out the scoring in a workmanlike display.

New York: 1 Alan Hearty,

2 Joe Bell, 3 Alan Carolan, 4 Eoghan Kyne, 5 Brendan Reilly, 6 Alan Rafferty, 7 Patsy Martin (0-1), 8 Adrian O'Connor (0-2), 9 Kevin McGeeney (0-1), 10 Robbie Moran (0-2), 11 Declan Reilly (0-1), 12 John McGoldrick (2-1), 13 Dan Doona (0-1), 14 Conor Brady, 15 Francie Cleary (0-2). Subs: Evan Byrne, Shane Clifford, Gary Dowd (2-2), Sean Munnely, Dennis Kilkenny, James Huvane, Justin O'Halloran, Shane Carty, Thomas McGovern (0-1), Paddy Smyth (1-1).

Referee: John Fitzpatrick (Rockland).

# 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.

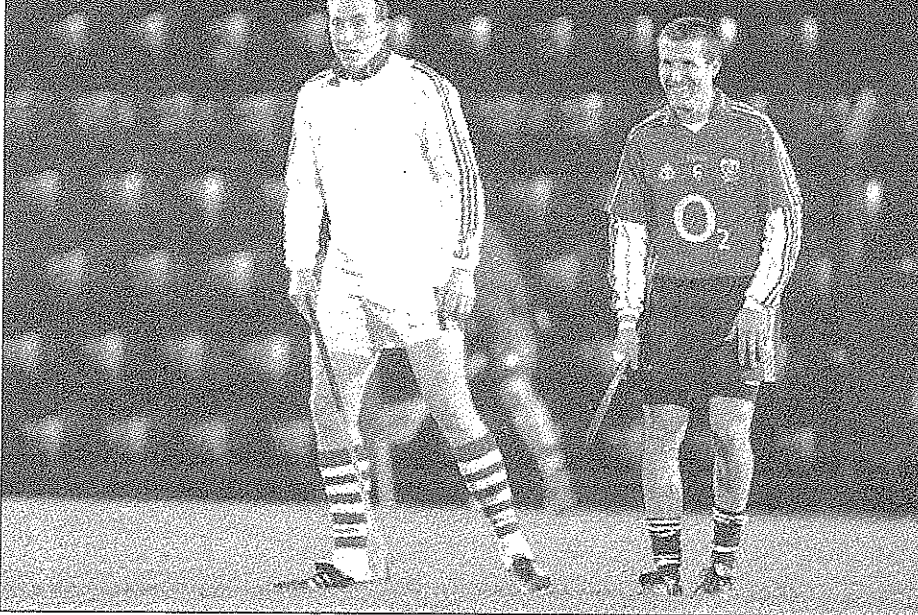
"I am not, as some would have it, resigning 'for the good of Cork hurling.' In fact, and without being presumptuous, I would regard my resignation in the current circumstances as being detrimental to Cork hurling in the long term.

"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 Garbner and Ben O'Connor, at Paire 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.

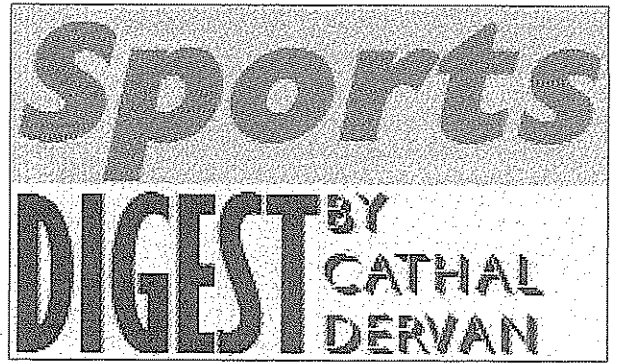
"He seems to produce a different display each day, one better than the next. He did very well for us, particularly in the opening half," manager Liam Sammon said afterwards.

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?"