



Ashbourne Badminton Club notes

Ashbourne Badminton Club's mixed 1 team won in dramatic fashion on Saturday, 11th February, in the Division 6 Cup Final against Beags Beo at Whitehall Road Terenure. The club congratulates the team: Patrice, Larisa, Ann, Val, Shane, Rob, Kern and Jon. The team now goes on to represent Dublin in Leinster.

The club's U15 team made it through to the County Finals of the Community Games and faced Moynalty in the Community Centre in Ashbourne earlier in the week.

Ladies 1 team made it to the Semi Finals of the Division 6 Cup competition in Whitehall Rd playing against Kilcullen on Sunday, 5th February. After four games it was level on games, matches and even on points, putting the ladies in a nail-biting rematch. Unfortunately, despite some fantastic badminton, Kilcullen won. Specific mention goes to Larisa Samorosenko, Valerie Lynch, Ann Moggan and Patrice Thornton.

Sports Psychologist at Ardboyne

FOLLOWING Meath Local Sports Partnership's recent 'Mind over Matter' forum, there has been growing demand for more insight into sports psychology and the role it plays in local sport.

In response, Meath LSP have announced that Gerry Hussey, sports psychologist with the Irish Boxing team and Munster Rugby team, will host an information evening on Monday, 27th February in the Ardboyne Hotel, Navan, at 7.30pm.

Hussey, a renowned expert in his field, will concentrate on some of the following key areas: choosing methods to best suit an individual player/athlete, performance management techniques for coaches and mentors, and an exploration of what makes a player tick.

This is sure to be an insightful workshop, one that should strike a cord with players and coaches of all sports. Places are limited and should be booked in advance. To book, complete a registration form (available from www.meathsports.ie) and return to Meath LSP by Friday, 24th February. For details call (046) 9067337.

SUPERBOWL COMMENT

A Giant addition to my sporting repertoire

By Brendan Boylan

IN the lead up to the most recent Super Bowl, the extent of American Football knowledge in this seat would have been the fact that there was a guy with an Irish name - Tom Brady - who was evidently a bit of a legend.

Then, a few hours spent trawling on Twitter gave a few more insights. It was learned that another lad with an Irish name, Eli Manning, was equally good and one of Brady's big rivals.

Then, a tweet on the official NFL page declared that 'America eats 293,000 miles of potato chips and drinks 493 Olympic sized swimming pools worth of beer on Super Bowl Sunday'. Even allowing for the tendency to exaggerate things in that part of the world, it was clear that this was big business!

There's a sort of automatic drawing factor to something you know very little about but hear other people talking about. A kind of curiosity. And, while something like the Super Bowl parties some of my mates were going to would have been pitching myself in at the deep end, when a mechanical misfortune meant I was unable to go for the usual Sunday night pint, the decision was taken to see what all the fuss was about.

At this point, thanks must be expressed to my colleague Fergal Lynch and Dunshaughlin GAA official Neil O'Dwyer for guiding me through my first Super Bowl.

They must have been driven demented with all my questions. Well, lads, ye have me hooked now and Super Bowl Sunday will be spent in front of the television next year as well! In fact, chances are the entire NFL season will now form part of the viewing schedule.

Now, they may have been very loose, but, yours truly was able to draw a few comparisons between the gridiron action and both Rugby League and its Union counterpart. For example, what they call 'plays' in NFL are like phases in Union and - as with Rugby League - each team only has four plays - or opportunities - to move the ball ten yards at a time.

As this year's showpiece between the New York Giants and the New England Patriots went on, more of it was understood and thus it became more enjoyable. Apart, that is, from the constant breaks in play, going over and back between the studio, ad breaks and Madonna still thinking she's an entertainer!

As with all good sport, the action was enthralling and the outcome lay in the balance right up to the end. In keeping with a perfect script, the plays that ultimately decided the vic-



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady.

tors were utterly dramatic. Firstly, after a low-key opening, the Giants made 78 yards in 9 plays at the end of which Manning put Victor Cruz in for a touchdown, giving them a 9-0 lead.

Brady's influence on proceedings then began to grow however and so, not surprisingly, the Patriots then came storming back into the encounter. Firstly, the quarterback set up Stephen Gostowski for a field goal to get his team off the mark before Brady then created a touchdown for Danny Woodhead after a move that was even more impressive than that which led to the Giants touchdown, lasting 14 plays and covering 96 yards. And it was a score which gave the Patriots a 10-9 half time lead.

Clear daylight emerged between the sides when Brady finished an 8 play, 79 yard drive with a 12 yard pass to Aaron Hernandez to put the scoreboard at 17-9.

From there though, it was all downhill for the Brady bunch! The talisman had been obviously hampered by a shoulder problem from early in the game and with him not at his sharpest, New York took full advantage.

They firstly registered a field goal from Lawrence Tynes and then when Brady was sacked - which looked like getting caught in possession to a non aficionado - the same player dissected the posts to leave it 17-15 as time evaporated.

Such tight contests are generally turned on minute details and so it was in this case. After Bill Belichick - the Patriots coach - challenged a refereeing decision and lost, Ahmad Bradshaw was allowed go in virtually unchallenged for what turned out to be the winning touchdown.

Brady did try a Hail Mary pass - what it is literally called in gridiron speak - but the pass was intercepted,

time ran out and the Giants took the spoils.

There's no doubt Brady's shoulder injury had a very big say in the outcome - so too did an ankle injury to their line back Rob Ninkovich. So it was Manning who won the battle of the quarterbacks with the Irish names. That was probably fairly fitting too, as Giants coach Tom Coughlin sounds fairly Irish as well!

It may have taken me a while to get the hang of things, but I now know what all the fuss is about and furthermore, why Brady in particular is held in such high regard. He has already become my favourite. Even though he's 34, his proclamation that he wants to play on for another four or five years was just what I wanted to hear - NFL has a new Irish fan!

By the way, not one can of Guinness or bag of chips was consumed by this writer while watching the Super Bowl.