

LEAGUE OF IRELAND GOALS

13

COLIN HEALY'S number of Ireland caps. The Cork City star became the first international to be named League of Ireland Player of the Year at the FAI awards.

20

HOW many home league games in a row Dundalk are unbeaten. They will equal the club's top-flight record if they avoid defeat against Sligo on Friday.

705

HOW many minutes have passed since Shamrock Rovers conceded a league goal at home, scored by Drogheda's Gavan Holohan on July 24 last year.

16

HOW many bulbs Soccer Republic pundit Tony McDonnell reckoned were not working in the Carlisle Grounds floodlights for Bray's game against Bohs.

LEAGUE OF IRELAND GOALS

Where would ya get it?



DUN IT AGAIN... Stephen Kenny lost more clothing

STEPHEN'S COAT FAILS

STEPHEN KENNY can do no wrong around Dundalk — except for the odd wardrobe malfunction.

The Lilywhites gaffer is loved in De Town for how he has transformed fortunes at Oriel Park in his two years in charge.

It means everyone watches out for him, though it also means everything he does is headline news.

So when Kenny left his coat behind in Panama Coffee in Dundalk on Friday morning, the local Dundalk Democrat duly reported the fact.

Café owner Stephen Egan explained: "Stephen came in for his cappuccino and his Greek yoghurt at around 10.30am. I didn't give it a second thought to be honest."

"Another one of the patrons, Neil Ford, saw the coat and said, 'Did Stephen Kenny leave his coat behind him?' It was at that stage that I knew something was wrong."

Egan speculated that Kenny's mind may have been elsewhere with the St Pat's match that night.

But he has got used to holding on to the Dundalk manager's clothing as Kenny last year accidentally left his jumper behind at the same café.

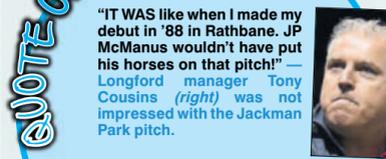
Kenny was informed of the whereabouts of his coat following the Saints game on Friday night. He said: "I don't think anyone would want my clothes! The last time I left a jumper there, the story went around the world. I don't know what happened."

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"IT WAS like when I made my debut in '88 in Rathbane. JP McManus wouldn't have put his horses on that pitch!" — Longford manager Tony Cousins (right) was not impressed with the Jackman Park pitch.

TWEET OF THE WEEK

ABSOLUTE scandalous decision highlighted on @SocRepublic like I told the ref I want an apology next time our paths cross Now I miss Cork. — Galway's Samuel Oji (right) is not happy about his red card against Drogheda.



TRAP A TONY

League stalwart McCarthy a vital cog in Ireland set-up ever since Giovanni's reign

By NEIL O'RIORDAN Chief Sports Writer

THERE was a time when it was players that League of Ireland clubs provided to the international team.

Sadly, these days, it is only staff off the field who get the international call-up. This week, Shamrock Rovers physio Tony McCarthy will not be on duty for games against Sligo Rovers and Bohemians.

Instead, he is helping Martin O'Neill's side prepare for the Euro 2016 clash with Poland. McCarthy has been in the role since the start of the Giovanni Trapattoni reign, proving that ex-pros do not have to go into coaching to stay involved post-retirement.

The former centre-half had an impressive 16-year playing career, winning five leagues titles with Shelbourne, a club record jointly held with former team-mate Owen Heary, as well as having five years cross-channel with Millwall and Colchester United.

When he reported for duty on Sunday, there were plenty of faces who were familiar to him from even before he started his current role in 2008. He and Roy Keane were in underage squads together. McCarthy told SunSport: "I have a picture of us in the Under-18 squad together and I think we played one Under-21 game together."

"So I think he remembered me but I don't know in what kind of light, probably just my big ugly face. Obviously, he went on to bigger and better things."



CAFF A GO... Bohs' Stephen Caffrey and Shels' Tony McCarthy clash in the 2000 FAI Cup final



Pat Fenlon at Shels, Bohemians and Rovers.

He said: "You would miss the dressing room after a win and things like that. Coaching has never really been my thing. I know a few people like Roberto Martinez, Nigel Adkins and Les Parry have been physios and gone on to manage but I've no intention of doing that."

"I played with Pat and he would respect my opinion and if he asks for it I would give it but I know my place. "But I do think having been a player, it helps dealing with players in my own role. I know what it's like to be injured and it's not a nice place to be."

"There is a grieving process and a bit of disbelief when players get a bad one so when they come in, you have to try and give them a lift. "A lot of the boys actually like being in the physio's room because we try to have a bit of a laugh so we've actually got a fine system in place at Rovers but if someone is in there when they're not injured. "Gary McCabe is in charge of that so he's always checking to

see there's nobody in there that shouldn't be.

"Doing what I do is a good way of staying involved and I think the likes of Jason McGuinness and Mark Rossiter are looking into following the same path. McCarthy began his playing career with UCD where he did an Arts degree, later followed by a Master's in Town Planning, before he returned to Dublin with Shels after a year with Derry City. After one season in which he won the league title and PFAI Young Player of the Year award, he was brought to Millwall by another Irish centre-half called McCarthy — Mick.

There he encountered back problems which piqued his interest in going down the sports medicine route, although he is modest enough to say the injuries did not prevent him from greater glories. He said: "I missed a year in the Championship because of it but you find your level. "The physios at Millwall weren't really able to do much for me but things have changed. "Osteopaths and chiropractors

are used a lot more. Things always evolve, it's a lot more holistic now.

"There wasn't much talk of horse placenta when I was a player, not that I'd be advocating its use."

And McCarthy says the medical care the Rovers players get will be every bit as good as that afforded to Keane and Co when they are in the FAI's care. He said: "The players do get looked after. "We might not have as many bodies because the resources are not as good but the care at Rovers reflects well in comparison to what they'd get in the Premier League. "We train at the AUL every day at 10.30am and I'm there from 9am to treat the injured players. There might be a day off training during the week but you might still be



WHAT'S UP, DOC... Tony McCarthy training for his degree in Osteopathy back in 2001

ON THE JOBBIE... Ireland physio Tony McCarthy is full of praise for captain Robbie Keane

particularly on a week like this. Dealing with the Ireland players is the same as the Rovers ones. "It's the same anatomy so you're dealing with the same football injuries."

"It's a little bit different in that in a qualification campaign it's kind of s\*\*\* or bust because you have maybe 10 games compared to a longer league season. "And also, the players belong to the clubs so you need to bear that in mind. That's more the doctor Alan Byrne's field. He would have a good relationship with all the club medics. "There is a duty of care but that works both ways. I'm sure players have played for their clubs when they shouldn't."

And given that O'Neill has been very careful not to risk players when they are carrying knocks, his annoyance at Everton boss Martinez claiming James McCarthy's injury problems were down to overuse by Ireland was understandable. If O'Neill is guided by the medical advice, McCarthy admitted that his predecessor had pretty forthright opinions in the area. He said: "Trapattoni was good

to work with. He'd nearly tell you what the injury was but I guess if you spend as long in the game as he had, you pick something up. "He was quite fixed in his views and it was quite funny with Robbie Keane, who seems to defy medicine at times. "Trap would be convinced that Robbie wouldn't be right for a game but he would get back and play. "To be fair we would be asking, 'How is he playing?' as well."

That willingness to make himself available has meant McCarthy has a healthy respect for the Ireland captain and his team-mates. He said: "There is no real difference between the dressing room in Tallaght or the Aviva Stadium, except that one is a good bit bigger. "It's the same feeling of satisfaction when you win. "They are brilliant fellas who love coming over and they make big sacrifices because a lot of the clubs would have time off during international weeks so they're missing out on time with their families."

He said: "Without naming names, there were some who played who, if they continue their development, will be in or around the squad. "Those matches have produced players every time we play them, with one or two going on to go full-time in England."



DESMOND... Under-21

Buckley wish not granted

By NEIL O'RIORDAN

NOEL KING has revealed that he turned down a request to allow Lee Desmond line out for Liam Buckley's St Pat's last night.

Buckley's options at right-back were severely limited because of Ger O'Brien's hamstring injury and Conor McCormack's suspension.

As a result, James Chambers — normally a midfielder — had to line out on the right side of defence.

King said, while he empathised with Buckley's predicament, he had no option but to refuse to release Desmond ahead of tomorrow's Under-21 European Championships qualifier against Andorra in Waterford.

King said: "I spoke to Liam but I wouldn't allow a player from an English club to play two days before our game so I can't allow one from the League of Ireland to do it either."

Striker Conor Wilkinson — on loan from Bolton — missed Oldham's League One fixture against Rochdale last night for the same reason.

King added: "Lee is with us, he's done well."

"He's in contention to start, whether he does or not is a different matter, but I wanted him."

"Liam wasn't happy but he understands." Ex-Newcastle United trainee Desmond, 20, made his Ireland Under-21 debut against Russia in November shortly before joining St Pat's from Shelbourne.

The only League of Ireland player in the current squad, he was one of just four home-based players among the 45 used by King in six matches last year.

Two have since moved to England — Brian Lenihan from Cork City to Hull City and Dylan Connolly from Shels to Ipswich Town.

But King has insisted he is keeping a close eye on the talent here, pointing to the game between a home-based selection and the Ireland Amateur side last month. He said: "Without naming names, there were some who played who, if they continue their development, will be in or around the squad. "Those matches have produced players every time we play them, with one or two going on to go full-time in England."