

The Echo

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The Echo: We've got the tapes to prove it

Sporting thought for the week:

This is really a lovely horse, I once rode her mother. Ted Walsh

Billy Elliot on Ice

Veteran Claretian Paddy Donaghy has revealed to *The Echo* how his obsession with ice dance is starting to affect his performance for Pat McLoughlin's senior team.

In a sometimes moving interview, Donaghy told our reporter how he has long harboured a wish to compete at the elite level of ice dance, but that his loyalty to the GAA has prevented him from taking the leap.

"It all started back when I was a cub on the lough shore" Donaghy began, referring to his childhood in Derylaughlin on the shores of Lough Neagh.



Donaghy attempts a "Death Spiral" spin

"I can remember watching Torvill & Dean at the Olympics. Ravel's Boléro, I don't think I have been moved by anything quite like it in my life. Not even the birth of my kids had the same impact on me in the way that those three minutes of magic touched me.

"Straightaway, I was down to the Lough every morning, begging that it would freeze over, even in the summer, so I could go and skate on it, and really express myself.

"Sadly, it never did freeze and so I was left plodding away with Derylaughlin U-14s, pulling and dragging lads about the place like they were Jane Torvill" Donaghy continued. "There's no way I could tell anyone I wanted to dance. I was the Billy Elliot of East Tyrone. The people in Derylaughlin are stout people, they just wouldn't have understood.

"Moving to London opened up a world of opportunity for me. Richmond Ice Rink became like a second home to me.

"The fact that both Aidan and Peter followed me to London made it harder to pursue my dream, as I had to carry on living the lie. The GAA first and ice dance always my secret.

"But now the truth is out" a clearly emotional Donaghy said. "The yellow cards are mounting up, and if you look at the match tapes, you'll see that each one is the result of me trying to perform some form of clandestine lift or swing or pivot on an opponent.

"Half the time I appear to be swinging off lads like clothes on a rotary clothes line, but the whole time I'm secretly



Ice dance: Paddy's passion

practicing some complex dance move or lift. I get away with it now as they all think I'm some old bloke struggling to keep up."

As for the future, Donaghy refused to be drawn on whether his own Olympic flame has been extinguished, merely saying: "*Feel, the rhythm, feel the rhyme. Get on it. It's bobsled time.*"

"As far as I'm concerned, if the Jamaicans can turn up and bobsleigh, then this blonde ballerina can dance the Olympic dance too."

Come On You Reds

Dedicated Claretian Pat Lynott was delighted to discover this week that he had been chosen to present to European Cup trophy to the Champions League winners in Madrid on June 1st.

Lynott (right), who entered a Europe wide draw run by UEFA, was astonished to hear the news that he would have the responsibility of presenting the cup to either Jordan Henderson or Hugo Lloris after the Liverpool v Spurs final on Saturday fortnight.

"I'm so chuffed" Lynott told *The Echo*. "It's a great honour for me. Obviously when I entered the competition I was hoping that my team, Man Utd, would be winning it, but let's be realistic... that was never going to happen, we're crap.



"But to have the opportunity to hand the cup over to a winning Liverpool captain, well that would be the next best thing in my book.

"It's a club so full of history and culture, with fans with such a driving passion for their team and a stadium that really puts everyone else's to shame in terms of history and atmosphere" he continued."

"I will of course need to appear neutral during the game, but I can assure you, I will be kicking every ball and urges those Reds on.

"Becoming a dad and Liverpool winning the Champions League; I mean, life just doesn't get any better than that, does it!" an excited Pat concluded.



Senior manager Pat McLoughlin was surprised to receive a call from O'Neill's asking him for a headless footballer to model the club's new hoodie.

"Take you pick" was Pat's rather disheartened reply.