

New Greyhound Stadium still top of agenda

THE construction of the new €20 million Limerick Greyhound Stadium is top of the to-do-list of the new CEO of Bord na gCon.

Last week, Adrian Neilan was appointed the new CEO of the Limerick based, Bord na gCon — the Irish Greyhound Board.

Neilan's appointment was confirmed last Wednesday at an Irish Greyhound Board meeting and comes just 12 months after the sacking of Adrian Tynan.

"There is a genuine willingness to get Limerick finalised and know exactly what we are doing," Neilan told the Limerick Leader this week.

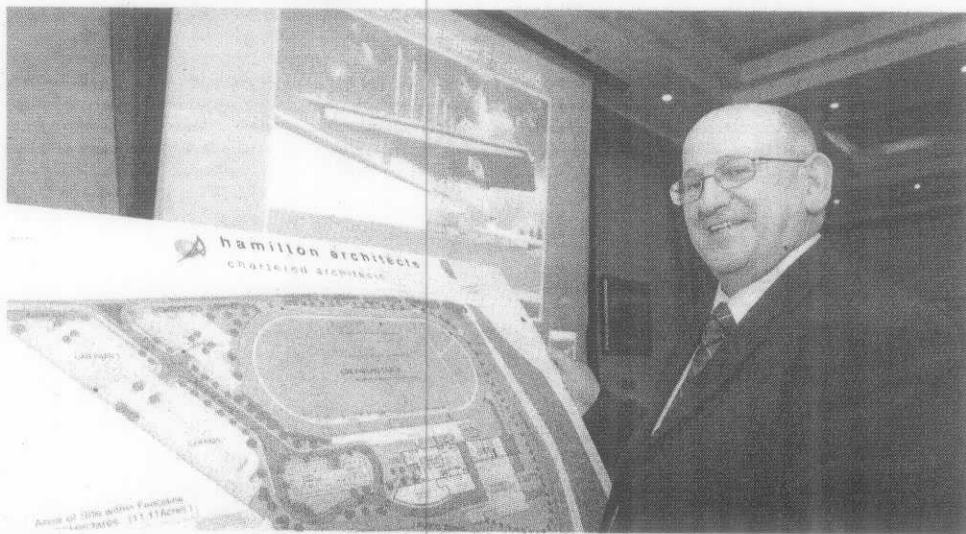
"My own view and indeed the chairman's view is that we might go ahead and deliver on the strategic plan, which contains some lofty goals in its own right, but if we don't build Limerick Stadium and get it to the level where it needs to be, we won't be seen as successful," he explained.

Neilan, originally from Ardfer, county Kerry is now living in Curraghchase in county Limerick.

He is married to Suzann and has three children.

In June 2005 Adrian joined Bord na gCon as Head of IT.

"We need to keep developing our tracks and obviously Limerick is a key one there for us — we got to



Gus Ryan, Greyhound Track Manager at the Markets Fiel pictured last year at the unveiling for the new Greyhound Stadium in Coonagh

get that on a firm definitive plan," said the new CEO.

"We are very very focused to making sure that happens and making sure we have a great site and a great offering for people."

He continued: "We are in discussions and like every conversation you don't know where it will end up."

"People might say that we need a new guy that can cut through red tape, but there is no such thing as a person like that, you have to follow process to make sure you get where you need to go."

Last August the Greyhound Board lodged its planning application for Limerick's new €20 million Greyhound Stadium.

The new 3,000 capacity stadium will be situated on a green field site close to the Two Mile Inn Hotel on the dual carriage way on the outskirts of Limerick City.

The address of the new facility lies in the south-east Clare parish of Meelick, so the planning application was made to Clare County Council.

A new five story stadium will be constructed, as well as a three story office block, which will house the Board's new headquarters.

The multi-million development will also include two restaurants, betting facilities, four bars and a function area.

"There is a genuine sense of good-will towards us getting this because people see the important social aspect associated with greyhound racing," said Neilan.

Neilan went to secondary school in Tralee CBS and then went to Trinity College Dublin to complete a degree in Electronic Engineering in 1991. He obtained a Masters in Computer Science in 1993. In 2001 he completed an MBA degree in Dublin City University.

He previously worked with Hewlett Packard Inkjet Manufacturing based in Leixlip, county Kildare.

Football trio ruled out for season

There was a triple blow to the aspirations of the Limerick senior footballers this week.

It was confirmed that trio — Stephen Kelly, Conor Mullane and Eoin Keating — would not be playing any part in the squad for the remainder of 2007.

Stephen Kelly with members of the Limerick management and players this Tuesday night and it was decided that Kelly could not give the desired commitment to the squad.

Kelly was dropped from the Limerick team for last Sunday's McGrath Cup quarter final win over Tipperary in Cahir.

It is understood that when Kelly was informed of the decision he opted not to take his place on the substitute's bench.

Instead Kelly toggled out with his native Newcastle West junior soccer side, who were playing in the last 32 of the FAI Junior Cup against Cahir Park AFC.

As it turned out the GAA pitch and the soccer grounds in Cahir are side by side.

Indeed, Kelly, who was a sub with the soccer team, watched spells of the football match from a gateway between the two sports grounds.

Kelly is also playing senior rugby at present and on Saturday last he played a full 80 minutes as Shannon defeated Clontarf 22-13 in the AIB All-Ireland Cup in Thomond Park.

The news of Kelly's departure was not the only bad news for Mickey Ned O'Sullivan's senior footballers this week.

It has been confirmed that neither Conor Mullane or Eoin Keating will be available throughout 2007.

St Senan's wing back Mullane has opted to take a year out of inter-county action.

The 26 year old was an All-Star nominee in 2004

and was selected on the Munster All-Star team in 2006.

Mullane made his championship debut in 2000, the same year that he won a Munster U21 medal.

Monaleen attacker, Eoin Keating is currently abroad and is not expected back in the country in time to assist the county team.

The loss of Kelly, Mullane and Keating comes at a time when Mickey Ned O'Sullivan attempts to rebuild the Limerick squad.

The Limerick management have the plan for the new season without the services of the retired Muiris Gavin, Johnny Murphy and Damien Reidy.

It has also been confirmed that Stephen Lucey, Conor Fitzgerald, Brian Begley, Mike O'Brien and Mark O'Riordan are again to concentrate on inter-county hurling this season.

Last season's impressive

centre back, Stephen Lavin is also unavailable at present.

The Adare man is in Australia, but is expected home in mid-February.

Another not available for selection is Seanie Buckley.

The Dromcollogher/Broadford attacker is recovering from a groin operation and it is hoped that he will return to full training in the next fortnight.

Compounding the present situation, Timmy Carroll will miss the next month through suspension.

Already in the wins over IT Tralee and Tipperary, the Limerick management have given first taste of senior inter-county competitive action to Diarmuid Carroll (St Senans), Dave McAuley (Monaleen), Thomas Cahill (Fr Caseys), Ger Collins (Milford), Sean Cronin (Newcastle West), Brendan Scannell (Fr Caseys) and Niall Mulvihill (Adare).

Players return to training as soccer turmoil continues

Members of last season's Limerick FC returned to pre-season training this week — on their own.

The players are left in limbo at present, while the FAI come to a final decision regarding senior soccer in Limerick.

Limerick 37 appeared in line to assume the mantle of the cities senior soccer club, but now much depends on a High Court date on Monday.

Undeterred former Limerick FC players Tommy Barrett and Pat Purcell have organised a training programme for themselves and former members of the Limerick FC squad.

The players took the initiative to independently regroup ahead of any Limerick based club securing a place in the new FAI eircom League of Ireland for season 2007.

Barrett secured the use of Hill Celtic's ground, Hogan Park, for training sessions free of charge and on behalf of the players he wishes to thank the Board of Hill Celtic FC for their co-operation.

Barrett and Purcell took the decision to resume training so that we are ready to train and sign for any new club that is set up in the Shannonside area or for any other League of Ireland club that may be interested in signing experienced league players.

All the players have a great loyalty and affinity to Limerick and wish to remain playing league football in the region.

PFAI Acting General Secretary Stephen McGuinness said: "The PFAI is behind Tommy and Pat and all the players. Tommy gained his Level One coaching badge following his involvement in the PFAI/FAI coaching course last season so it's great to see him putting his new skills to use in this regard."

"We are here to offer any support we can to Tommy and the players and we look forward to seeing league football return to the Limerick area in the very near future as the league needs a strong and vibrant club from the Shannonside region."

Andy Lee lines up Cuban opposition for January 25

Limerick professional boxer, Andy Lee is back in the ring on January 25.

The Castleconnell 22-year old is set to fight in Las Vegas.

The unbeaten Irish middleweight has been pencilled in to meet Cuban puncher Carlos Aballe in his seventh pro fight later this month.

Both men will go head to head at the Orleans Casino in Las Vegas on January 25 next.

The former Irish Olympian returned to training at the Kronk gym in Detroit last week and says he is now back in the "groove".

Lee's last fight as an amateur in April last year saw him beat ex Cuban world champion Yordanis Despaigne as part of an Irish dominated Four Nations team that hammered Cuba 6-2 at the Stadium Dublin.

But the Limerick southpaw, now based in Detroit, is taking nothing for granted and wants to get 2007 off to a flying start against 33 year old his Miami based rival who has won five of his nine pro fights (3ko's)

"I'm in good shape and I'm looking forward to getting back in the ring and making a good start to 2007," said Lee.

"He looks like a steady opponent and he has had more professional fights than I have had so I can't afford to be complacent against anyone."

UL Aughinish into National Cup final

Limerick's senior women's basketball side, UL Aughinish booked their place in the Women's SuperLeague National Cup final with a resounding 22 point win over Munster rivals, Bausch & Lomb Wildcats, 84-62.

In two weeks time, UL Aughinish will play Team Montenegro Hotel Cork in the final at the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght.

In the semi final, Dearbhla Breen lead the early onslaught on the Wildcat's defence with Courtney McDaniel and Fiona Scally also getting in on the scoring act.

Scally continued to score freely for the Limerick women but the Wildcats demonstrated their fighting spirit and kept UL on a short leash throughout the opening period. At the climax of the opening period Costin sunk another score to allow Wildcats to trot out the first quarter with a single point lead. 20-21.

Jim Nugent's side stepped up a gear in the second quarter and began to turn the offensive screw on the Wildcats. A string of scores from Scally allowed for the Limerick players to bypass Waterford to the dizzy heights of 35-27.

McDaniel and Guiney were in sparkling form for UL and ensured that at the halfway point they built up a ten point lead, 43-33.

Wildcats endeavoured at the beginning and new American Crystal Costin brought the gap down to nine points to 60-51. UL were not prepared to let their lead slip through their fingers with Fiona Scally netting eight points in a deadly three minute spell.