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## Limerick are the kings of basketball court

By Jerome O'Connell at Tallaght

LIMERICK is the new basketball capital of Ireland after a double success in the ESB National Cup finals.

Burger King Limerick captured a first ever men's senior cup in the National Arena Tallaght when they overpowered S&S Star, 88-83. Also taking up residence on Shannonside is the junior women's trophy, after the University of Limerick outclassed Presentation Thurles 73-

58. University of Limerick senior women's team were denied a unique treble when an exceptional Dart Kilbeston team defeated Ger Tarrant's young side, 78-66.

Cheered on by bodhran beaters and cheerleaders from Villiers Secondary School Burger King played at a pace rarely seen in basketball headquarters.

Burger King team captain, Tommy Walsh shot three-pointers on the final buzzer to continue a trend he had set all weekend, leading his side into the history books.

A semi final tally of 18 points was bettered by two



Mott Hehir one of the stars of the show in Dublin

in the final as he dazzled the crowds with his outside shooting.

Born in the Bronx, New York he plays with an Irish passport as a result of his Kerry and Armagh parents.

"It was an unbelievable weekend, we've played with the utmost confidence all year and that is why we were here. Last year when the season ended that was our goal that we would all come back and have a go, no matter what, and we finally got a chance to do it", said the team captain.

He also stressed that their preparations after their 80-76 Saturday night

semi final victory over cup favourites Frosties Tigers Tralee, meant that they were at no disadvantage in the final, despite 24 hours less recuperation than their Belfast opponents.

"They made sure we got plenty of drinks into us, weren't letting us get injured", he said of coach, Tom Hehir, and team manager Mary Hehir.

"I was very lucky, I'm not really considered a three point threat but this weekend, Cleotus gave me a lot of confidence, telling me to keep going and pushing me and I just hit it. Once I think about it I just got to do it in a flash."

Coach Tom Hehir said that he was thrilled for his entire panel of young players.

"Someone said to me that we scored 30 points in the first quarter, but I was expecting Star to come back at us, I said to my guys that they would try to do to us what we did to them and we were ready. Throughout the whole game we never lost more than a six point lead, if they got it down to four we went straight back up, there was never a stage in the game where I thought we were going to lose."

Full report with pictures in weekend Leader.

# Stade Jean Bouins salutes Munster

By AIDAN CORR in Paris

STADE Jean Bouins had never seen anything like the scenes that greeted Munster's history victory over the home side last Saturday afternoon.

The red and white army on tour took over the stadium minutes after the final whistle in an expression of sheer joy and adulation that was fully deserved.

Munster had given one of the best performances in their long history becoming only the second team in the history of the European Cup to win away in the quarter finals and in the process silenced the partisan Parisiennes with a controlled and skillful display of rugby.

A brilliant first half try

from Anthony Horgan and a conversion, a drop goal and two penalties from Ronan O'Gara contributed to another piece of Munster rugby history.

For a while in the second half it looked as if Stade would win the tie and when Diego Dominguez landed his third penalty to leave just two points between the sides with six minutes remaining, Munster hearts were pounding.

The tension of the five minutes of injury time did little for the heart conditions of the Munster fans but the side held out, making tackle after tackle to thwart the Stade attacks and when referee Whitehouse signalled the end of the game with a long shrill blast of his whistle, it was party-time in gay Paris.

The celebrations went on into the early morning in this beautiful city. Throngs descended on the Irish bars

and the Fields of Athenry rang high into the cold January skies.

While everybody had high praise for the Munster lads, Stade Francais coach, John Connolly predicted that the province would not go the full distance in the competition.

"They do not have the quality of teams like Leicester," he told me after the game. "Munster have a good side but they are not strong enough in every aspect of play to win the trophy. I doubt if they will be champions."

The Munster dressing-room was a sea of celebration. A French television crew squeezed their equipment through the narrow door as the roof of the dressing-room shuddered to the sound of 'Stand Up and Fight'. This was celebration time for a side that has given so much enjoyment to a whole nation.

Beating Stade Francais in Paris is very special and it was an honour and a privilege to be there to witness it for the throngs who made the journey.

Now Munster will have to wait for the draw that will decide whether they have to travel again for the semi-final. According to coach Declan Kidney, the team will take very game but denied that Munster now deserve to be Heineken Cup champions.



"There are three other teams left in the competition, so we will see what happens between now and the semi-finals. The side showed great discipline today and their dedication to the training sessions all week were exceptional. Their discipline was certainly a feature of to-day's victory and I'm delighted for them. It is days like that we are in this competition for."

## St Patrick's GAA club want press barred

CITY based St. Patrick's GAA club will this Tuesday put forward a motion to the county board to have the press and radio excluded from attending future county board meetings, writes John O'Shaughnessy

Their motion comes under the heading Matters for County Committee, delayed from annual convention which was held in early December.

A full gathering of delegates is expected to debate the St Patrick's motion, one of several on the agenda at Claughaun clubhouse.

Meanwhile, the senior hurling challenge between Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, scheduled for the Gaelic Grounds on Saturday was postponed because of inclement

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