

been all but wrapped up. Real Madrid's opposition for the glamour fixture has yet to be finalised.

A visit by Real Madrid would finally allow local soccer supporters in the Mid West see 'the galacticos' up close and personal.

Back in September 1980, Limerick opted to play their

seen as a key element in the build-up to the September 5 visit to Cyprus for a vital World Cup qualifier, include Denmark.

FAI CEO John Delaney confirmed that the Association were in talks with Thomond Park bosses about the possibility of staging an international tie at the €40 million

providing the opposition for any August friendly in Limerick as the two sides would be meeting in the 4-Associations tournament in 2011.

Limerick FC CEO Andrew Mawhinney confirmed last month that the details of the hugely attractive tie have been agreed with Sunderland chairman Niall Quinn.

bourne, Monaghan United, Wexford Youths, Kildare County, Waterford United, Sporting Fingal, Finn Harps and Longford Town.

Ahead of the start of the season, Limerick FC have launched a special price offer for season tickets.

In an offer that is open until February 28, adult tickets cost

under-16 combination ticket price of €180.

Limerick FC have also announced details of a fundraising Race Night on Saturday April 4 at Limerick Greyhound Stadium, Markets Field.

The night will consist of a 10-race programme.

Race 8 will be a 'Buster' race: The ticket with the correct fin-

against Italy at Croke Park.

Also, all losing tickets will be entered into a draw for a further two tickets to the game.

'Buster' tickets cost €20 each and are available from Limerick FC officials and ticket holders will gain free entry to the Markets Field on the night. Normal admission price is €8 to the Limerick Greyhound Stadium.

GAA INTERNATIONAL SERIES

International Rules set for Gaelic Grounds

Jerome O'Connell

INTERNATIONAL Rules is on its way to Limerick.

Croke Park chiefs have confirmed that Limerick's Gaelic Grounds is to host the first test of the 2009 series on Saturday October 24 between Ireland and Australia.

The second test will take place one week later on Sunday November 1 in Croke Park.

The hugely anticipated clash is expected to attract a capacity crowd of just under 50,000 to the Ennis Road venue and the occasion will mark the official unveiling of the new floodlights in the Gaelic Grounds.

Limerick GAA officials beat off competition from Casement Park in Belfast, McHale Park in Castlebar, O'Moore Park Portlaoise and Breffini

Park Cavan to host the International Rules test.

County Board officials made a presentation to Croke Park chiefs earlier this month, but confirmation of the decision only came last Saturday when Central Council rubber-stamped the fixture for Limerick.

The much anticipated match, which will see the best Gaelic footballers in the country take on their counterparts from the AFL, will be broadcast live on RTÉ television and millions of viewers will also watch it down under.

Maria Kelly, chief executive of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce has estimated that the game will boost Limerick's economy by over €10million.

"There is a particular formula for calculating these things but if you look at the estimate that every match

in Thomond Park generates around €7.5 million then that tells you how important these types of events are," said Maria Kelly.

"I'm sure that our network of hotels are particularly delighted but even if people don't stay in the city money they will spend money on things like fuel, food and drink so securing this event is hugely important," added Ms Kelly.

Limerick GAA secretary Mike O'Riordan paid tribute to all who helped secure the historic event for the Gaelic Grounds.

"We worked very closely with Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council, Shannon Development, the Chamber of Commerce, An Garda Síochana, the Third Level Institutions, the Munster Council and the local media to secure the Test and I would

like to extend my thanks to them all," explained O'Riordan.

The County Secretary confirmed that work on installation of the floodlights in the Gaelic Grounds is to move ahead at pace.

"We will be putting the work out to tender in the next week or so," he stated.

O'Riordan also added that it is hoped to play the 2009 County Senior Football Championship Final underlights as a test run for the International Rules game.

O'Riordan explained that a special sub committee will be put in place to organise all events surrounding the visit of the Aussie Rule side.

"We hope to incorporate some of our 125 celebrations with the International Rules and create a Bank Holiday weekend of GAA activities. We

hope to create a good atmosphere around the weekend and we are delighted to be able to bring millions of euro into Limerick at a time when it is needed."

Were a Limerick player to make Sean Boylan's squad it would add to the occasion.

Last year, Croom's John Galvin, Adare's Stephen Lavin and Ian Ryan of St Senan's were all included in Sean Boylan's provisional squad for the trip to Australia, but the trio failed to make the final squad.

Former Meath manager Boylan is in charge of the Irish side, along with Anthony Tohill, Eoin Liston and Hugh Kenny.

In 2003 Stephen Kelly was part of the touring Irish squad, while in 1999 John Quane also travelled down under.

Leader Sport



Jerome O'Connell
GAA

061 214 513 - joconnell@limerickleader.ie



Colm Kinsella
Rugby

061 214 511 - ckinsella@limerickleader.ie



Brian McDonnell
Editor

061214514 bmcdonnell@limerickleader.ie

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