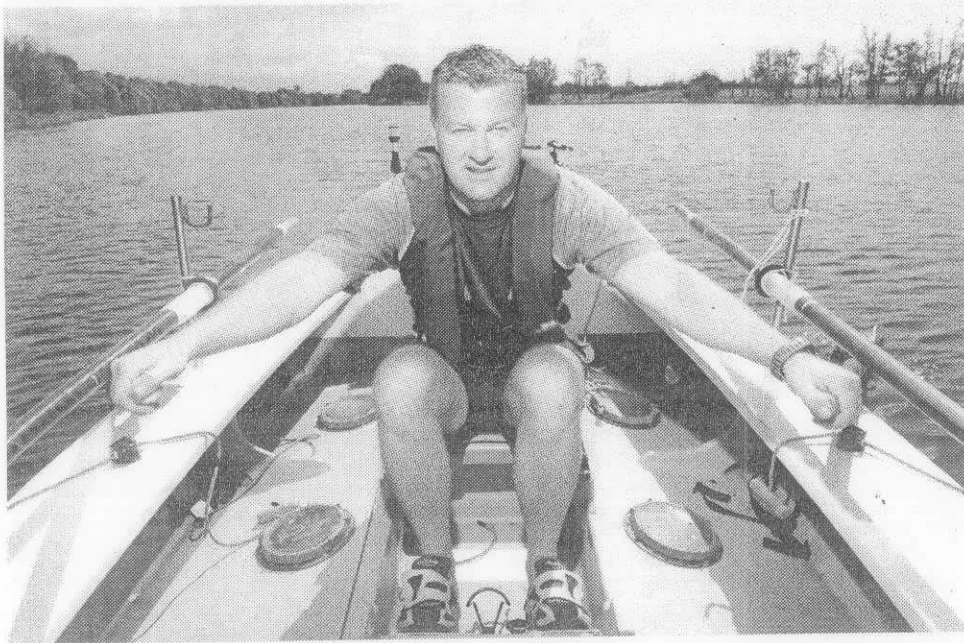


Limerick Oarsman takes Atlantic challenge



A LIMERICK rower is set to tackle one of the worlds greatest individual sporting challenges. Sean McGowan will become the first Irish man to row solo across the Atlantic leaving on December 6 next from the Canary Islands travelling to Antigua in the Caribbean. The 100 day journey over 2,500 nautical miles will be part of the 2009 Woodvale Atlantic Row Race.

The row also aims to raise 100,000 euro to benefit the Limerick founded charity Soweto Connection to support South African families affected by AIDS.

Speaking at the announcement of the row in aid of the Soweto Connection Limerick oarsman Sean McGowan outlined; "It has always been my personal goal to take on this cross Atlantic chal-

lenge and a number of months ago I decided that now was the right time for me.

"I have just completed an MBA and always targeted the completion of that programme as when I would dedicate more time to rowing. After many months of consultation with my wife and children we decided to go for this event in 2009. It is a huge commitment from

my family as much as myself but it wouldn't be possible without their support".

He added; "the intensity of the training has really picked up in preparation for the December 6. My weekends has revolved around travelling to Arklow for open water training and combing in that with indoor sessions and a very strict nutrition regime. One

of the toughest things to prepare for is the mental aspect of the event which will mean 24 hours a day with just my own company."

The row will aim to raise 1 million rand for the Soweto Connection, a charity founded by UL lecturers Sheila Killian and John Lannon while on sabbatical in South Africa. A study trip to a Cape Town township by Sean as part of the MBA programme introduced him to the work of Soweto Connection.

The fund raising for the charity will include an innovative schools programme that will give children all over the country the chance to record a message of support which will be sent to Sean by satellite as he rows. This "Shout out to Sean" programme will give teachers specially-designed worksheets matching the school curriculum, and allow the childrens' voices to be heard hundreds of miles out into the ocean. All schools and youth groups are welcome to participate. The funds raised will

go directly to building a nutrition centre and school in the Khayalitsa Township in Cape

Town. Schools will also follow the row on the atlantic09.com website and the daily blog up-

dates from Sean on his progress across the Atlantic.

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