

12. "Playing at the really would be the most exciting challenge of my career," said the current Moroccan Open champion.

With respect to European Ryder Cup matters, however, the chief concern on this side of the Atlantic, is the well-being of Woods. And naturally, it is based on sound financial reasons.

Last month, the USPGA Tour negotiated a television contract valued at \$850 million to run from 2003 to 2006. Last Sunday, in the absence of Woods from the leader-

people stop asking questions about a supposed slump every time Tiger stops doesn't win."

In the meantime, with a \$1 million top prize, the money here is well worth playing for, whatever one's aspirations about winning. It is certainly a far removed from the time of Harvey S Firestone who, in 1929, established this country club so as to reward his employees with relatively inexpensive golf.

As Woods has discovered, nothing stays the same.

Portugal, Clarke has a keen sense of golfing history. So he was aware of how Hogan had made a miraculous return after near-fatal injuries in a car crash, to capture the US Open at Merion in 1950.

"I saw where he sank that enormous putt on the 17th - it must have been close to 50 feet," he said. "And I saw where he played a one-iron second to the 18th, from a downhill lie."

And how did Clarke play that finishing hole? "I got home with a

de...  
the...  
sim...  
resp...  
It...  
desp...  
equi...  
here...  
could...  
Sadly...  
perip...  
cients...  
help...  
a diam...

## ROWING

# Four find the going tough

From Liam Gorman in Lucerne

IRELAND'S lightweight four, which won silver at the Nations Cup, the world under-23 championships this year, found the going tough at the senior world championships at Lucerne yesterday.

Neil Casey, Noel Monahan, Timmy Hamedy and Paul Griffin were sent to these championships to gain experience and yesterday they certainly did. They were, in the words of manager Mick O'Callaghan, a bit outclassed as they finished fifth and last in their repechage despite setting a good time of six minutes and six seconds. They now start in the C final.

However, the news for Ireland's premier gold medal hope Sam Lynch is good. The draw for today's semi-final of the lightweight single sculls sees him avoid both reigning world champions, Michal Vabrousek, of the Czech Republic, and Italy's Stefano Basalini, who was champion in 1998.

Lynch, a double gold medallist at World Cup regattas this year, would be expected to have every chance of beating either, but now he knows he will not meet them until the final, should all qualify.

The medical student from Limerick faces scullers from Slovakia, Argentina, France, the US and Germany today. The A final, for which the first three will qualify, is on Saturday.

Also competing today is heavyweight sculler Pdraig Hussey, who also won silver at the World under-23 championships and is in Lucerne for development purposes. The 21-year-old faces an interesting clash in today's C/D semi-finals with Matthew Wells of Britain. Three qualify for the C semi-final.

Irish Times

23/7/01

1921

Anyone requiring access to these records should...

## RUGBY/Celtic League

# Leinster make

By John O'Sullivan

LEINSTER have made five changes to the team that beat Glasgow 39-11 in their opening match of the inaugural Celtic League for tomorrow night's clash with Llanelli at Stradey Park (7.05). Peter McKenna replaces Girvan Dempsey at full back with the latter dropping to the bench.

John McWeeney comes in on the right wing for St Mary's College club-mate Denis Hickie. In the pack the front five is retained while it is a case of all change in the back row. Aidan McCullen comes in for Trevor Brennan at blindside, Eric Miller replaces Victor Costello at number eight while last season's skipper Liam Toland takes the number seven jersey from Keith Gleeson.

Coach Matt Williams was quick to point out that the changes merely reflected his intention of doling out opportunities to players

to contest various positions and also the fact Leinster will have a hectic fixture schedule - applicable to all provinces - in the weeks ahead. "We have three games in seven days, starting with Llanelli and then facing Ebbw Vale on Tuesday and Ulster the following Friday.

"Competition for places is also important. There is no doubt that the Ulster match is enormously important and will represent our most difficult game. But that does not mean we don't want to win this (Celtic League) competition. Ebbw Vale will be here on Tuesday and any side that Mike (Ruddock, the former Leinster coach) coaches will be highly motivated and play good rugby.

"Changing the team around gives players a chance to show their wares."

Williams conceded that Malcolm O'Kelly, currently "enjoying" a pre-season training regime

since re...  
would...  
tomorro...  
O'Drisc...  
petitive...

It was...  
ster wou...  
home E...  
against...  
Lansdown...  
tional ve...  
them for...  
castle whi...  
nybrook...

It was ab...  
tickets for...  
against U...  
would be...  
Vale matc...  
Given that...  
demand for...  
game, it is...  
will be snap...  
Llanelli...

players thro...  
Gareth Jen...  
bizarre accid...

## SPORT/Digest

# McKiernan to take

ATHLETICS: Catherina McKiernan yesterday revealed she is to take an enforced but welcome break from serious training as she is expecting her first child, writes Ian O'Riordan.

Due next March, it rules the 31-year-old out of the World Cross-Country Championships in Dublin in the same month. She also confirmed yesterday she would not be competing in the Dublin Marathon on October 29.

A former winner of the London, Berlin and Amsterdam marathons, as well as runner-up five times in the World Cross-country, McKiernan has suffered with a succession of

injuries over the last two years.

Now running pain-free, she is still hopeful of getting back to her best over the next year, and like Sonia O'Sullivan and so many top female athletes before her, she is confident that bearing a child will see her return stronger.

O'Sullivan is currently on a similar break from competition as she is awaiting the birth of her second child. Earlier this week it was also revealed that Romania's Gabriela Szabo has plans to take a year out of competition with the intention of having a baby.

According to race director Jim Aughney, entries for this year's Dublin Marathon are already

ahead of this...  
"We hope to...  
9,000 mark,"...  
from America...  
effected this ye...  
has one of the...  
international et...  
marathons."

This year has...  
take over as off...  
Marathon spons...  
prizemoney for...  
finishers is to in...  
eight Ethiopian...  
expected to trav...

BOXING: fight against De...  
Nielsen in Copet...  
postponed.