



Some of the fans who turned out at Shannon Airport to greet world rowing champion Sam Lynch on his return from Switzerland this week (LL)

# Fans row in behind golden boy Sam

By IAIN DEMPSEY

AROUND 200 supporters thronged the arrivals hall at Shannon Airport for the return of world rowing champion Sam Lynch.

The 25-year-old from Ennis Road expressed surprise and delight as a huge cheer erupted when he walked through the doors into the hall.

Mayor Sadlier welcomed Mr Lynch back to Limerick after his gold medal triumph in the men's lightweight single sculls in Lucerne, Switzerland, during the World Rowing Championships.

And while Mr Lynch was being congratulated at Shannon Airport, fellow Limerickman and champion rower Tony O'Connor was celebrating victory with his fiancée Sinead Jennings, who both scooped gold medals in Switzerland.

"When you come home



World rowing champion Sam Lynch with his mother and father Tom and Geraldine at Shannon Airport (LL)

to a reception like this you really feel you've achieved something," said the gold medal winner.

"It's starting to sink in now. It was a good day last Saturday and I feel it's only going to get better. I have to find time to relax now at this stage. It's been hectic but it's great to see everyone here.

"There are a lot of faces I don't know but there's a lot of faces I do. I haven't been home in three months and it's nice to be

back because Limerick is home," he said.

Fellow club members at St Michael's Rowing Club spoke of their delight with Mr Lynch's win, remembering the disappointment at the Olympics when the Irish team, which he was part of, were pipped to the bronze medal position.

As family, friends and club members celebrated with the returning hero, Mayor Sadlier spoke of how proud Limerick was of the champion rower.

"I think this is an absolutely incredible achievement," said Mayor Sadlier.

"I would go as far to say that it's still hard to get our minds around that we have here in Limerick a world champion, a gold medallist. The sheer scale of it is somewhat difficult to grasp. It's an incredible sporting achievement in what was clearly a great sporting weekend for Limerick," he said.

The Mayor confirmed that Mr Lynch will be given a civic reception at City Hall.

"He's a tremendous example to all sporting youngers, particularly younger people," said Mayor Sadlier.

"I think the message from Sam is that hard work, commitment, dedication and 99 per cent perspiration shows that you can make it, and he did make it."

Mr Lynch joined family and hundreds of wellwishers to carry on the celebrations in Peter Clohessy's pub in the city.