



Catherine, pro cage fighter supreme, sets sights on title in USA

By Rebekah Commane

LIMERICK'S only professional cage fighter has set her sights on becoming the first woman in the world to achieve the Ultimate Fighting Championship title, in America.

Catherine Costigan, from Limerick city, already has gold and silver medals in the European Sanda Chinese Kickboxing Championships under her belt, won in Italy last year, and is now intent on fighting in America.

She also plans on increasing the appeal of the sport to women in Limerick.

Having introduced mixed martial arts (MMA) to Limerick, Catherine, along with her business partner Dermot McGrath, run Pankration Kickboxing Academy in Ballysimon, which is attended by 150

students, aged four years and up.

"The sport involves striking, punching, kicking and takedowns, but it's a really safe sport," Catherine told the Limerick Post.

"I began training in kickboxing when I was 14, and in 1993, Dermot saw that mixed martial arts was growing in popularity, so we ran the first MMA tournament in Ireland in 1999".

Catherine is now one of just two female professional fighters in Ireland.

"There are some really intelligent ladies involved," she explains.

"I train with Rosie Sexton in Manchester, the number one ranked woman in the world, and she has a PHD in computers and maths and is a classically trained pianist.

"It takes true dedication and a strict diet to be a professional.

"I train very hard and follow a strict diet to maintain a weight of 48kg".

Through the sport, Catherine, who is ranked as the number 13 female professional fighter in the world, has made many friends.

"When we are in the cage we are professionals, and there is no animosity afterwards".

She encouraged other ladies, and gents, to try out the sport, which offers a "head-to-toe workout".

"I'm one of very few female teachers, so women who come to our classes often feel relieved when they see me, because we can relate to each other".

Catherine is a self confessed over achiever, and her next ambition is to fight in America, where MMA is the fastest growing sport..

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Axing of transatlantic routes positive for Aer Lingus

AER Lingus has credited the axing of transatlantic routes from Shannon among the reasons for an increase in the company's revenue.

According to results published by the airline for the first quarter, profit margins show that ending the long-

compared to a loss of €20.8 million in the first six months of 2010, while its share price rose by 9.3%.

Its sales growth in the second half is expected to be similar to the first six months, when revenues rose by 5.8% to €569 million.

The introduction of

