



IRELAND

v ITALY

Saturday 2 February 2008

Croke Park, Dublin

Referee: Jonathan Kaplan* (South Africa)

*** Chris White (England) withdrew with calf injury on 30 January**

Touch judges: Wayne Barnes (England), Peter Allan (Scotland)

TMO: Tim Hayes (Wales)

Assessor: Tappe Henning (South Africa)

Last match, RWC2007 group game

30.09.07

v Argentina Stade de France Lost 15-30

15-Murphy 14-Horgan 13-O'Driscoll © 12-D'Arcy 11-Hickie 10-O'gara 9-Reddan 8-Leamy 7-D Wallace 6-Easterby 5-O'Connell 4-O'Callaghan 3-hayes 2-Flannery 1-Horan

Subs used: R Best, N Best, O'Kelly, Boss, Duffy

T: O'Driscoll, Murphy C: O'Gara PG: O'Gara

TEAM v Italy

Coach Eddie O'Sullivan has resisted changes and made just four changes from the team that was eliminated in the RWC group stage against Argentina.

Winger Andrew Trimble and lock Malcolm O'Kelly replace the injured Shane Horgan (comeback in A team) and Paul O'Connell (back) while Girvan Dempsey and Rory Best return at full back and hooker

To accommodate Dempsey, utility back Geordan Murphy moves to the wing to replace the retired Denis Hickie, and Best is in for the suspended Jerry Flannery.

Simon Best (cardiac problem at RWC) and Stephen Ferris were also not considered due to injury

15 Girvan Dempsey (Terenure College & Leinster)

- **02.10.75 6-2 14-5**
- **79th cap - 18T = 90pts**
- **Debut: 1998 v Georgia**
- 9th cap v Italy – 4T = 20pts (1T in 2000, 2003, 2T in 2007)
- Started the first 3 RWC2007 games with try v Georgia
- In fine form in 2006 and 2007 and retained full back place from Geordan Murphy, missed 2007 summer tour, but back for RWC
- 5th on the Ireland caps list with his 78 caps along and 4th equal on try lists (3rd is Shane Horgan on 20T)
- 64th cap at full back (inc 7 as sub), played 9 tests on wing 1998-99 and in 2005, also 6 subs games out of position.
- Played 29 consecutive tests from summer 2003 to Australia 2005 – prior to that run, he missed tests through persistent groin injury.
- Has scored 2T from the wing, and 16T from full back in tests.
- Scored only 6T of his 18T in Six Nations games



14 **Andrew Trimble (Ballymena & Ulster)**

- **20.10.84** **6-2** **15-6**
- **20th cap - 8T = 40pts**
- **Debut: 2005 v Australia**
- 3rd cap v Italy – 1T = 5pts (in 2007)
- 2 games at RWC2007, with try in opener v Namibia
- 4 caps in centre, 8 caps on left wing, 2 caps on right wing as starter and 5 sub tests. Missed last two 2006 autumn series tests through injury and replaced by returning Denis Hickie. Now has further chances following Hickie's retirement after RWC2007.
- First call up for 2005 autumn series tests
- 4th season with Ulster Rugby
- Former Ireland Schools and Ireland U21 centre, plays club rugby for Ballymena
- Theology student

13 **Brian O'Driscoll (Blackrock College & Leinster)(captain)**

- **21.01.79** **5-11** **14-13**
- **80th cap - 31T 4DG = 167pts**
- **Debut: 1999 v Australia**
- 9th cap v Italy – 3T = 15pts (1T in 2000, 2003, 2004)
- 4 games at RWC2007 with tries in first game v Namibia and in last match v Argentina
- 42 tests as captain, which beats Keith Wood's previous record of 36, and has led Ireland to 30 wins in 42 tests
- Ireland record 31T in internationals, 2T more than Denis Hickie
- 79 caps takes him 2nd equal on the Ireland caps list with Hayes and Stringer
- Has 17T in Six Nations, beating the Irish record of 14T by George Stephenson, with his try v Wales 2007 and is 5th in the all-time list – three players have 18T in equal 2nd place (Lowe, G Edwards, R Underwood)
- Scored test hat tricks v France (2000) and Scotland (2002)
- All 3 Lions tests in Australia 2001. Lions captain in 2005, first from Ireland since Ciaran Fitzgerald in 1983
- 2006 Six Nations Player of Tournament

12 **Gordon D'Arcy (Lansdowne & Leinster)**

- **10.02.80** **5-10** **13-12**
- **37th cap - 4T = 20pts**
- **Debut: 1999 v Romania**
- 6th test v Italy – 1T = 5pts
- All 4 games at RWC2007
- Test tries – 2T v Scotland 2004, 1T v France 2006, 1T v Italy 2007
- RBS Man of Match v Wales 2007 (19-9)
- Played just 25 mins test rugby in 2004-05 for Ireland (hamstring problems), returned for all 3 autumn tests in 2005 and played 19 successive tests from comeback until rested for summer 2007 tour to Argentina.
- 2004 Six Nations Player of Tournament.
- Lions v Pumas 2005
- 1st cap in RWC99 aged 19 as a late call up to squad after Girvan Dempsey withdrew, won 2nd cap v Fiji in autumn 2002, some 3 years later.
- Leinster debut in 1998 as a teenager, Ireland A debut in 1999, and full debut at RWC99 as sub for Conor O'Shea v Romania. Not in RWC2003 squad.



11 **Geordan Murphy (Leicester Tigers, England)**

- **19.04.78** **6-0** **13-8**
- **53rd cap - 18T 1C 1PG 1DG = 98pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v USA**
- 7th test v Italy – 2T = 10pts (1T in 2003, 2005)
- 2 games at RWC 2007 – sub in opener v Namibia, starter and try v Argentina
- Is 4th equal on Ireland all-time try scoring lists, with Girvan Dempsey
- Played in 10 of Ireland's 11 tests of 2006, rested v Pacific Islanders, but 8 tests of 14 in 2007
- Has scored 13T from full back and 5T from wings.
- Broke leg v Scotland in final RWC2003 warm-up test in Sept 2003. Missed RWC2003. Returned for Italy game in 2004 Six Nations
- Played in 3rd test for the Lions v NZ, and also for Lions v Pumas 2005.
- In England with Leicester Tigers since 1997 after moving from Naas RFC.
- Won Heineken Cup final medals in 2001 and 2002.
- Played on both wings, full back and centre for Ireland.

10 **Ronan O’Gara (Cork Constitution & Munster)**

- **07.03.77** **5-11** **13-1**
- **78th cap - 14T 122C 144PG 11DG = 779pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v Scotland**
- 9th test v Italy – 3T (in 2001, 2007, 2007) 23C 19PG 1DG = 121pts
- Has 395 Six Nations points to date – third on all time lists behind Jonny Wilkinson (429) and Neil Jenkins (406)
- Now 8th on world points lists – Percy Montgomery is 7th with 873pts
- Top of the points list for 2005 and 2006 and 2007 Six Nations
- First points and try scorer for Ireland at Croke Park (v France) and also RBS Man of Match
- One of the players who made their test debuts v Scotland in 2000 immediately after the 50-18 loss at Twickenham
- 2005 Lions v NZ – 3rd test (sub)
- Played in three Heineken Cup finals with Munster, with 13pts in the 23-19 win against Biarritz in 2006. Also Lions tourist 2001 to Australia

9 **Eoin Reddan (London Wasps, England)**

- **20.11.80** **5-7** **12-8**
- **6th cap – no pts**
- **Debut: 2006 v France**
- 1st test v Italy
- Started the last 2 group games at RWC2007 – winning place over Stringer and Boss
- Made test debut v France in 31-43 loss in 2006.
- 4th season with Wasps, initially vied with Matt Dawson for scrum half role, won 2006 Powergen Cup and 2007 Heineken Cup winners medals
- Missed 2006 summer tour to rectify groin problem, late starter in 2006-07 season, missed 2006 autumn tests, but back for 2007 in national squad
- Originally with Connacht and Munster (understudy at Munster to Stringer)



8 Denis Leamy (Cork Constitution & Munster)

- **27.11.81** 6-2 17-0
- **28th cap - 1T = 5pts**
- **Debut: 2004 v USA**
- 5th test v Italy – no pts
- All 4 RWC2007 games as starter
- First test try in 2006 Triple Crown win v England
- Played all 11 tests of 2006, and 20 consecutive tests before being rested for summer 2007 to Argentina
- 23 tests at No 8 (inc sub), after replacing his Munster captain Anthony Foley, he started in all back row positions in first four caps.
- First senior call up for 2004 autumn tests. Missed 5 tests through injury in spring 2005.
- Played around 100 games for Munster in all competitions (inc Magners League and Heineken Cup). 2006 Heineken Cup winners medal at No 6
- Capped at Schools and U21 levels.

7 David Wallace (Garryowen & Munster)

- **08.07.76** 6-2 16-3
- **42nd cap - 7T = 35pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v Argentina**
- 5th test v Italy – no pts
- All 4 RWC2007 games as starter
- Returned v Italy in opening Six Nations test of 2006, he had previously played only once in 13 internationals (Japan in summer 2005) since 2004 summer tour. Had been injured.
- Played 10 of 11 tests in 2006 (rested v Pacific Islanders), he was recalled in 2006 after fine form in Heineken Cup win. And all games in 2007 Six Nations – then rested for summer tour
- 3 major long term absences from Ireland line-up due to injury
- Lion in 2001, all 3 Wallace brothers are British Lions.
- Ireland Development tour in 1997, then U21 and A caps, then senior tour to SA in 1999 and 1st cap on 2000 senior tour in Argentina.

6 Simon Easterby (Scarlets, Wales)

- **27.01.75** 6-3 16-10
- **63rd cap - 8T = 40pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v Scotland**
- 9th test v Italy – 1T = 5pts (in 2007)
- Overtakes Anthony Foley (62 caps) as Ireland's most capped back-row forward
- All 4 RWC2007 games as starter – try in opener v Namibia
- Played all 2006 and 2007 Six Nations but then rested for both summer tours
- Captain in two 2005 autumn tests v NZ and Australia, took over captaincy from injured Brian O'Driscoll.
- Won 20 caps in a row before missing Japan summer tour 2005, as he went on Lions tour, played impressively in last 2 tests v NZ, scored try in 2nd Lions test, then returned to captain country.
- Played for hometown Harrogate, then Leeds Tykes and was eligible for England, but then had a spell with Sydney University before joining Llanelli in 1999.
- Originally played for the Irish Exiles in early part of career and is younger brother of Guy Easterby (28 caps 2000-05).
- Plays his club rugby in Wales – Powergen Cup final 2006 v Wasps
- One of the players in who made their test debuts v Scotland in 2000 immediately after the 50-18 loss at Twickenham

5 **Malcolm O'Kelly (St Mary's College & Leinster)**

- **19.07.74** **6-8** **18-10**
- **90th cap - 8T = 40pts**
- **Debut: 1997 v NZ**
- 9th test v Italy – 1T = 5pts (in 2004)
- Sub in last 2 RWC2007 group games – last start was v Scotland (21-31) in RWC2007 warm-up test
- Has scored 3T in the Six Nations (v Scotland 2000 and 2005 and Italy 2004)
- Ongoing Ireland caps record holder, he passed Mike Gibson's previous Ireland record of 69 caps - which had lasted for 26 years - v Scotland 2005 and celebrated with a try.
- Missed the entire 2007 Six Nations but back for summer tour to Argentina
- Born at Chelmsford, Essex, but educated in Ireland and has masters degree in mathematics from Trinity College Dublin.
- Lions tourist 2001 to Australia.
- Signed new contract with Leinster to end of 2007-08 season.

4 **Donncha O'Callaghan (Cork Constitution & Munster)**

- **24.03.79** **6-6** **17-5**
- **41st cap - 1T = 5pts**
- **Debut: 2003 v Wales**
- 7th test v Italy – no pts
- All 4 RWC2007 games as starter
- Scored his first test try v France 2006 in the fine recovery from 3-43 to 31-43
- Had appeared in all Ireland's 18 tests since the start of 2005 autumn series – until rested for summer 2007
- Played 18 tests as sub, 22 starts to date.
- Played 2nd and 3rd tests for Lions v NZ
- Some 100 games for Munster despite internationals Galwey, O'Driscoll and O'Connell also featuring in his position. Progressed via Ireland U19 (1998 world champions), U21 and A side.
- 2006 Heineken Cup win
- Came into Ireland training squad for 2003 Six Nations after Gary Longwell tore hamstring v France. Test debut v Wales in 25-24 success at Cardiff.

3 **John Hayes (Bruff & Munster)**

- **02.11.73** **6-4** **19-10**
- **80th cap - 2T = 10pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v Scotland**
- 10th test v Italy – no pts
- All 4 RWC2007 games as starter
- Played the first 15 tests of 2006 and 2007 before being rested for the 2007 summer tour to Argentina
- 2nd equal on Ireland's all time caps list on 79 caps with O'Driscoll and Stringer
- Test tries v Romania in Sept 2002 and Scotland 2005.
- Passed Phil Orr (58 caps) as Ireland's most capped prop
- 2005 Lions v Pumas, did not make test side in NZ
- His first 34 caps came in 35 tests (rested v USA in summer 2000) until injured before the 2003 summer tour. Missed 6 tests before RWC2003 after groin injury. Then had a run of 20 successive tests to 2005 Lions tour.
- First game of rugby aged 18, with Bruff RFC in Limerick, then moved to Shannon aged 20 and went on to win 1995 club title. Then went to NZ 1995-1997 (Invercargill), back to help Shannon win 1998 title. Now back with Bruff
- Heineken Cup final losses in 2000 and 2002 and then the win of 2006
- One of the players who made their test debuts v Scotland in 2000 immediately after the 50-18 loss at Twickenham



2 **Rory Best (Belfast Harlequins & Ulster)**

- **15.09.82** 6-0 16-10
- **18th cap - 2T = 10pts**
- **Debut: 2005 v NZ**
- 3rd test v Italy – no pts
- Played in 3 of the 4 RWC2007 games – started the first two games v Namibia and Georgia (try), then sub v Argentina. The other 7 forwards started all 4 games
- Started all 2007 Six Nations tests
- First test try v Pacific Islanders 2006, then 2nd try after 45 secs v Wales 2007 in his next game.
- Started v SA and Australia 2006 for injured Jerry Flannery (shoulder), who played nine games in a row in 2005-06 season, and then retained place for all of the 2007 Six Nations
- Impressed in Heineken Cup to first claim place in squad
- 5th season with Ulster, is the brother of Simon Best, and the brothers play for same club as the capped Neil Best
- Educated at Portadown College, and was with Ireland at 2003 World U21 Cup.

1 **Marcus Horan (Shannon & Munster)**

- **07.09.77** 6-1 16-8
- **52nd cap - 5T = 25pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v USA**
- 8th test v Italy – no pts
- All 4 RWC2007 games as starter, 7 of the 8 forwards started all 4 games (Hooker changed)
- Played in 28 of the previous 31 Ireland tests before injury before Scotland 2007 match since back injury in 2004 – had previously played 16 times in 18 tests before that injury.
- Played all 5 games at RWC2003.
- Has come through to replace Peter Clohessy and Reggie Corrigan, and was originally used as impact player
- Won 2 All Ireland club titles with Shannon, and 2006 Heineken Cup with Munster
- Munster schools in 1996, senior provincial debut in 1998 and capped as sub v USA on 2000 summer tour. Played 13 times for Ireland A before promotion in 2002.

Substitutes

16 **Bernard Jackman (Clontarf & Leinster)**

- **05.05.76** 6-1 17-13
- **5th cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2005 v Japan**
- 1st test v Italy
- First made the Ireland squad for the 1998 tour to SA, but not capped until Japan tour in 2005, and then again on the 2007 summer tour to Argentina
- Hooker from the leading club side Clontarf, and the improving Connacht province in 73 games, who returned to Leinster in 2005 and has made a marked improvement.
- 47 games for Leinster to date
- Formerly also with Lansdowne, he has also played for Sale Sharks in the Zurich Premiership in 24 games.
- From the Ireland A squad, which he has captained.



17 **Tony Buckley (Shannon & Munster)**

- **08.10.80** 6-5 21-1
- **3rd cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2007 v Argentina**
- 1st test v Italy
- Late call up to RWC when Simon Best became ill
- Former lock forward in his younger days
- Munster debut in 2005, won national club title with Shannon, and into national squad in 2007
- Only 25 games for Munster to date since September 2005
- First capped on 2007 summer tour to Argentina

18 **Mick O'Driscoll (Cork Constitution & Munster)**

- **08.10.78** 6-5 17-0
- **12th cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2001 v Romania**
- 2nd test v Italy – no pts
- Not at RWC2007, last capped on 2007 summer tour to Argentina in both tests
- First test start, v Italy 2007, nearly 6yrs after test debut, and after 8 tests as sub
- Comes in for Paul O'Connell who broke a thumb against Scotland
- Ireland A captain, and former U21 international back in 199
- Played for Munster since 1998 but spent 2003-05 with Perpignan before returning to Munster. 2006 Heineken Cup win.
- Same club side as O'Callaghan, Leamy and O'Gara

19 **Jamie Heaslip (Clontarf & Leinster)**

- **15.12.83** 6-3 16-7
- **4th cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2006 v Pacific Islanders**
- 1st test v Italy
- Has been cover in the squad before being brought in to the 2006 autumn series squad. Reserve to Denis Leamy and played on 2007 tour v Argentina, and won 3rd cap in 21-31 loss to Scotland in RWC warm-up
- Scorer of the final try at Lansdowne Road (Leinster v Ulster 31.12.06)
- Was a nominee for the IRB Young Player of the Year in 2004
- Has played around 60 games for Leinster since making debut in March 2005 in Celtic League
- Has come through the Ireland development system with caps at U19, U21 and has played in 2005 and 2006 for Ireland A
- Dublin University student



20 **Peter Stringer (Shannon & Munster)**

- **13.12.77** 5-7 11-5
- **80th cap (if he plays) - 6T = 30pts**
- **Debut: 2000 v Scotland**
- 10th test v Italy – 2T = 10pts (1T in 2003, 2005)
- Played first two games of RWC2007 v Namibia and Georgia
- First 79 caps in 88 Ireland tests and is 2nd equal behind O’Kelly (89) in the Ireland caps lists along with O’Driscoll and Hayes
- 52 test starts with O’Gara after Italy in Aug 2007; world record is Gregan and Larkham with 76 tests.
- One of the players who made their test debuts v Scotland in 2000 immediately after the 50-18 loss at Twickenham
- Second on Ireland’s caps list behind Malcolm O’Kelly (86)
- Three Heineken Cup finals with Munster- losses in 2000 and 2002 and a try in the 2006 win against Biarritz.
- Probably the smallest in 2007 Six Nations at 5-7 and 11-0 along with Pierre Mignoni of France

21 **Paddy Wallace (Ballymena & Ulster)**

- **27.08.79** 5-11 12-11
- **7th cap (if he plays) - 1T 10C 6PG = 43pts**
- **Debut: 2006 v SA**
- 1st test v Italy
- One game at RWC 2007 – sub in opener v Namibia
- Sub v SA in added time in November 2006, then 26pts v Pacific Islanders on full debut. Was the first Ireland No 10 who was not Humphreys or O’Gara for 78 tests and 7 years (Elwood v Romania at RWC99)
- And the first who was not Elwood, Humphreys or O’Gara in Ireland’s No 10 jersey for 10 years and 115 games (Paul Burke v Italy 1997)
- Has been with Ulster since 2001, and though a fly-half he found David Humphreys (72 caps) as first choice, so he became the utility player in the squad.
- Has played for Ireland at U19 (World Cup winners) U21, A and Sevens, and has been in the full national squad since 2002.
- 7th season in Ulster squad, and has played some 85 games for Ulster

22 **Robert Kearney (UCD & Leinster)**

- **26.03.86** 6-2 14-13
- **2nd cap (if he plays) – no pts**
- **Debut: 2007 v Argentina**
- 1st test v Italy
- Played for Ireland at Schools, U19 captain, and A levels, then won full cap on 2007 summer tour.
- Debut for Leinster in September 2005, has played 57 games since then with 13T
- Student at UCD



Coach

Eddie O'Sullivan

21.11.58

- Appointed in November 2001, after being assistant under Warren Gatland, won 3 Triple Crowns in 2004, 2006 and 2007, and was assistant coach of the 2005 Lions
- Former coach of Connacht, Blackrock College, Ireland U21 and US Eagles
- Played for Garryowen, and former PE teacher
- In August 2007, his contract was extended to 2012.