



Field of Dreams (3x30 series)

An Athena Media production for Newstalk supported by BAI Sound and Vision Funding Scheme.

TX St Patricks Day March 17th.

Inspiring sports stories for our national holiday.

Field of Dreams is a three part series exploring an alternative take on sports and telling stories which inspire. Produced by Athena Media with the support of the BAI (Broadcasting Authority of Ireland) Funding Scheme Sound & Vision, the series will be broadcast on Newstalk on St Patrick's Day. The three half hour episodes cover topics from how sports projects in inner city primary schools are tackling racism to the sibling competition between two sets of sporting sisters but it kicks off with a timely feature on the All Ireland Club Championship and the winning hurlers of Portumna in Co Galway. The All Ireland Club Championship Final takes places on St Patricks Day and Portumna have taken the title for the past two years.

Field of Dreams: Club Heroes – 10am, 17th March, 2010, Newstalk 106-108

The clash of the ash and the pride of local clubs. It's been a golden age for Portumna GAA and its legendary hurlers, All Ireland Club Champions for the last two years and pushing for a third title in 2010.

In Club Heroes we meet the champion hurlers of Portumna and find out why, for many players, a club victory is even more important than a county title. As team player Leo Smith puts it 'for a small town like Portumna there's a great buzz around the place... I mean you've grown up with these guys. You'd die for each other out there...it means so much to be out there and representing your club, your county, your province.' In this radio feature we hear the story of Portumna from the players themselves, a story of brothers, like the famous Canning brothers including team captain and corner back Ollie Canning. It's been a golden decade for the club which is now considered one of the most successful teams in the country. The senior hurlers have just celebrated their 3-in-a-row county victory and are aiming for another 3-in-a-row in the All-Ireland Finals. Given that the Club only gained senior status in 1992 its success has been phenomenal. In this special documentary we meet senior team manager, Johnny Kelly, captain Ollie Canning and players Leo Smith and Eoin Lynch. For Ollie the bond between the team players is as close, if not closer, than brothers. 'I know if any of the lads where in trouble I'd stand up for them same as I'd stand up for the brothers'. The spirit that binds them together is, they say, more than sport, its about family, locality and belonging. The sense of pride when they bring home the cup is often better than All Ireland county titles. 'Its what we dream about since we were young lads' says Leo Smith 'hurling together in the under 10, under 12....running out with your club mates that's what it's all about'.

www.portumnagaa.ie

Field of Dreams: Sisters Act – 10.30am, 17th March, 2010, Newstalk 106-108

In Sisters Act we meet two sets of competitive sisters; the French O'Carroll twins, Rebecca and Charlotte, in athletics and the Murphy sisters, Annalise and Claudine, in sailing. Two different sports but both sets of sisters have their eyes on one prize, the Olympic Games, but to get there may well mean having to beat their own sister.

For athletic champions Rebecca and Charlotte French O'Carroll there's never any problem finding someone to train with or run against. They're identical twins who both compete in cross country, middle and long distance races and have grown up in their sport together. The girls, now 20, started running at school and were coached by Dundrum South Athletic Club coach Eddie McDonagh. For the twins it's never a case of sibling rivalry; 'its almost like you feel you're not racing for yourself, you're racing for your twin to win as well,' says Charlotte. For Ian O Riordan of the Irish Times the girls have the mark of champions and compared their track record to date with legendary stars like Sonia O Sullivan. In this radio special we hear the story of the girls, their coach and their decision to go stateside to advance their athletics. Sonia O'Sullivan says it's these coming years which will prove decisive while coach Eddie McDonagh says athletes like Sonia didn't reach their stride until their mid twenties so much can be expected from the twins and their hopes for the next two Olympic Games in 2012 and 2016. The challenge of sisterly competition in a completely different sport is what we hear from the Murphy sisters whose mother Cathy McAleevy, competed for Ireland in the sport they now follow, the single handed women's laser. Claudine and Annalise know that if they are to make the Olympic Games for Ireland that theirs is a sport in which only one woman can be selected so it may well be they are competing against each other for that place. But that does not divide them. 'We'll push for each, we're both going to strive to be the best' says Annalise and they support each other in their efforts to win. We hear from their coach Rory Fitzgerald, their mum Cathy and from Ireland's Olympic competitor Ciara Peelo who carried the Irish flag at the Beijing Games.

Field of Dreams: Count Us In – 6.30pm, 17th March, 2010, Newstalk 106-108

March 21st is International Day against Racism and this feature showcases how sport can unite and cross all boundaries that divide us. In Count Us In we hear the story of how a sports initiative in Dublin's inner city primary schools is not just introducing children to new sports but encouraging and promoting multi-racial play and integration. 'Count Us In' is run by Sport Against Racism in Ireland (SARI) with boys and girls in primary schools in Dublin's heartland, Dublin 8, the Liberties. This radio feature follows the project through its run across Spring 2009, and find out how sports unites and what the children think of it. As the project gets underway again this year we hear the voices of former Ireland manager, Brian Kerr who talks about his own deep commitment to SARI and we get the story from SARI's founders Frank Buckley and Ken McCue. One of the players who has come through SARI's soccer league Emecka Onwubiko shares his story, coming to Swords as a boy of 11 from Nigeria and his pride in playing for Ireland in the U19 team. For Brian Kerr the work SARI does in schools is even more essential in a recession when the concept of integration may become more challenging. But like many he's concerned about funding and state commitment; 'the big thing for SARI is survival because obviously funding and resources are very scarce these days... Without funding we can't sustain our efforts or continue to roll out events like the schools programme'. The real stars of 'Count Us In' are the children who share their stories and thoughts, who learn to take on new sports and make new friends.