

We'll reinvest extra cash in our roots, insists GAA

By Eamon Donoghue

GAA bosses have hit back at demands to put money from the Sky Sports deal into its grassroots by insisting the revenue will go back into developing the game and building facilities across the country.

Sports Minister Leo Varadkar yesterday urged the GAA to set out how it plans to spend the money from the new three-year deal with the British subscription channel.

'What I think would be of reassurance to fans and the general public would be some indication as to how the GAA is to spend the money they are going to get,' he said. 'Certainly, I'd like to see that filter down to clubs and players as well.'

GAA director general Páraic Duffy responded: 'We use our money to develop our game, to support communities around Ireland, to build the facilities that mark the GAA and put it apart from other sports.'

Many fans have reacted furiously to news of the GAA's new €30million media rights deal which will mean a



Memo to Adam: Mayo lost this one to Dublin

huge number of supporters will be unable to watch live games for free as before.

For the next three years, Sky will

have exclusive rights to show 14 championship games live, including eight qualifiers, two football quarter finals and four other games in the provincial series.

Supporters have questioned the effect the new deal will have on rural areas and the amateur status of GAA players. The Sky Sports pay-to-view policy will limit access to those signed up to its €768 subscription package.

Meanwhile, GAA president Liam O'Neill has accused RTE of 'unprofessional' and unbalanced coverage of its Sky Sports deal. 'Quite frankly, in relation to last night [on Prime Time], we are shocked by the treatment we got from RTE. Every single one of the interviews was aggressive,' he said yesterday.

RTE managing editor of current affairs David Nally defended its coverage on RTE's Six One news last night, saying: 'Nine people spoke in studio on the subject in favour of the GAA and the Sky deal, three against and one was neutral. So how can that be an example of a programme that was biased against the GAA?'

Angry callers lit up RTE's Live-line show 'without exception', said host Joe Duffy, as they expressed outrage at the deal.

One caller challenged the GAA's claims that this decision will benefit Irish people living abroad. 'Why don't they just sell national

SKY DOESN'T KNOW THE DUBS FROM ADAM

SKY Sports has started its GAA coverage by lifting a 63-year curse on the Mayo senior football team.

Mayo last won an All-Ireland in 1951, but according to the Sky Sports team's first foray into Gaelic games, the westerners took the Sam Maguire home last year.

After receiving exclusive rights to 14 live championship games for each of the next three summers, Sky Sports gave its viewers a tutorial on Gaelic games yesterday.

Viewers will no doubt be hoping that the British broadcaster brushes up on its facts before its GAA debut on June 7, as of course Mayo lost last

September's final to Dublin.

Sky Sports presenter Adam Leventhal explained to the viewers: 'Last summer London's senior Gaelic football team made history after they beat County Leitrim to qualify for the Connacht final for the first time in their history.'

'The team in green and white were eventually beaten in the Connacht final by Mayo, who went on to win the All-Ireland.'

In that All-Ireland final Dublin defeated Mayo, whose wait for 'Sam' goes on.

This was not Leventhal's first blooper; the presenter stuttered through a report on Alex Ferguson in 2012.



Blooper: Adam Leventhal

made available to all our citizens and not sold off as a commercial entity,' he said.

However, Ireland's International Rules manager Paul Earley defended the GAA's decision:

'I can understand the frustration and I'm sure that was taken into account by people in making the decision, but that was part of the trade-off for the GAA. For the international dimension, and for Irish people abroad and a general wider audience to watch.'

Earley has commented in recent years on TV3, which has shown a number of live championship games since 2008.

'TV3 would have been left disappointed, but as with everything, when a GAA executive has a vision, this being an international one, someone loses out.'

Mayo goalkeeper Rob Hennelly shared Earley's optimism. The All-Star nominee feels that the added competition for RTE, and the addition of 'different media personalities' will add to the 'all round spectacle' for the GAA.

'I think from a spectator's point of view I can see people's concerns. But a lot of people are subscribed to Sky now, the All-Ireland semi-final and final will still be on RTE, and if it wasn't for Sky then maybe some of these games wouldn't be seen at all.'

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'We might lose our identity'

pop on the topic, while Offaly legend Séamus Darby also expressed fears over the GAA losing its identity. He said: 'The downside of that then is the rural people who don't have Sky and won't ever have Sky and just can't afford it. I live in rural Ireland and it is so much part of the parish that we might lose our identity a bit.'

Clare TD Timmy Dooley, Fianna Fáil's spokesman for sport, echoed Mr Darby's concerns that the deal would affect older people.

'The Government needs to stand up for its citizens and ensure that our national game is

Judge tells sisters to 'take up knitting' after school brawl

By Gordon Deegan

TWO sisters involved in a violent row outside an Ennis primary school were told yesterday that they 'should behave in a different way and maybe take up knitting'.

A judge made the suggestion to take up needlework after imposing two four-month suspended sentences on Rose Mahon and Laura Molloy.

The court heard while the women were attacking a Jeep, Ms Mahon's husband, Conor Mahon, ran across the school playground with a slash-hook along with a 13-year-old armed with a machete to give chase to two others as parents collected their small children.

The two others, Darren Maughan and Michael Maughan, barricaded themselves into a classroom containing eight five-year-old children



Pleaded guilty: Laura Molloy

and one teacher. Judge Patrick Durcan said that he didn't accept that the two young mothers were minor players in the drama that unfolded at the school 'and are as equally

guilty as anyone else involved'. Ms Mahon, 24, of Ballaghboy halting site, Quin Rd, Ennis and her 23-year-old sister Laura Molloy of 21 An Pairc, Bruach na hAbhainn, Ennis pleaded guilty to attacking a 4x4 1999-registered Land Rover belonging to Thomas Sherlock outside the school.

They caused €1,500 worth of criminal damage.

Judge Durcan said that a 1999 Jeep would be barely worth €1,500 today and said that he would accept €150 in compensation for the damage carried out by the pair.

The Maughans had been engaged in a traveller row with the Molloy's at the time. The court heard there have been no further incidents since.

Judge Durcan said: 'Young children may not have observed what your clients did, but many adults did. They should behave in a different way and maybe take up knitting or something like that.'

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