



Christmas gift guide The ultimate list

compiled by Eamon Donoghue and Patrick Madden

Right, there's some good news and some bad news. The bad news is you have only got 11 shopping days left until Christmas and the madness has started. The streets are impossible to navigate without getting sucked into a bottle-neck of shoppers idly gazing at wintery window displays, while the shops are the equivalent of a messy breakdown on a mud-bath pitch, with frenzied bargain hunters elbowing all and sundry out of the way to pounce on a reduced jumper as though it were a ball in the in-goal.

In fact, there isn't anything which embodies the spirit of Christmas less than the panic and stress of Christmas shopping – you saw what happened on Black Friday.

So the good news is we've done the hard work for you and compiled the ultimate list of sporting Christmas gifts – whether you want to buy for the 10-year-old football enthusiast or the miserly senior golfer, we've got you covered.

€10-€50

Teletext Mugs

With the plethora of live sport on offer, we are often in danger of forgetting where we came from. The next time you're complaining your 3G signal isn't good enough to stream Sunday night's La Liga action, take a second to remember an old friend no longer with us – remember the days when the only way of finding out the latest scores was to go onto Ceefax and type in 302. There are generations who relied on the service for their football fix, so give somebody a trip down memory lane with a mug showing the result of their football team's finest moment as it read on trusty old Ceefax. Manchester United v Bayern Munich in '99, Liverpool v AC Milan in '05 or Crewe Alexandra v Cheltenham in '12 – take your pick.

Where – Order online from www.p302.co.uk
How much – €19.01

Beautiful game wall stickers

Bring your heroes into your home with some wall-art with a difference. Baggio or Best, Roy Keane or Ronaldinho can be purchased as wall stickers thanks to Beautiful Game. There is a huge array of choice, including life-size designs, so youngsters can see how they size-up compared to their footballing idols, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and, erm, Marouane Fellaini.

Where – www.beautifulgame.co.uk
How much – Prices start from €15

Munster personalised gifts

Munster are giving supporters the opportunity to show their allegiances with a personalised gift service – nothing, and I mean nothing, quite shows your loyalty to the team like a personalised jigsaw puzzle or A5 writing pad. Choose from Munster phone covers, water bottles and pencil cases – you can even upload a picture of your choice, meaning you can carry Peter O'Mahony on a key ring in your pocket.

Where – <http://www.munsterrugbypersonalisedgifts.com>

How much – Keyring €3.49; iPhone case €29.99

Golf ball finder glasses

Instead of wasting your money buying the golf enthusiast in your life a sleeve of balls which will be swiftly dispatched into various bushes and fields, get them a pair of golf ball finder glasses instead. They enable you to pick up the ball much more easily when it's lost in the shaggy stuff – fingers crossed they let you see to the bottom of ponds as well.

Where – www.amazon.co.uk
How much – €12

Bobble filter bottles

With all the activity you'll now no doubt be planning, you're going to need to keep hydrated. Sport can be thirsty work, whether you're playing it, or watching it. You're often better off sticking to the water. It's not always easy on the go though, and nor is it cheap, need we remind you. But thanks to Bobble's filtered bottles, you can fill up from the kitchen or even toilet sink and still enjoy drinkable water, wherever you want it. And depending on where you get it from, perhaps even for free. Water for free, yes you heard it here first.

Where – Most home stores, or waterbobble.com, where there's currently 20 per cent off.
How much – €10.49.

The Beerbelly

Fancy a cold beer while watching the match but too stubborn to pay €5 a pop for a plastic pint pot of bog-standard lager? We've most definitely got you covered thanks to "The Beerbelly, the stealth beverage system that makes it easy to sneak a drink where ever you want! It holds 80oz – that's more than a six pack of your favourite beverage." Camouflaged in a beerbelly pouch under your top, throw in your drinks and a cooler bag, and with those outreaching tubes you can either keep that glass constantly full, or stretch it down your arm and lap it straight up. For those of you who already come with a beerbelly installed, we're not too sure how effective this stealth operation will be, but it's always worth the punt.

Where – thebeerbelly.com
How much – €40.32

Stade Francais calendar

We're going out there with this one, the popular Stade Francais calendar 'Dieux du Stade' is out for 2015 and it's, well, steamy as ever. If you're planning on buying this for that special lady though, be prepared to feel inferior for ever more. It translates as Gods of the Stadium, although we're not sure if Heinke van der Merwe or too many of the front row will see action in this one. Forwards win matches, as they say, and backs, they pose in semi-nude calendars, or so it would seem in Paris. Back in 2009, coach Ewen McKenzie claimed that such was the importance of the calendar that the club were prioritising the recruitment of good-looking players. You could make somebody very happy this Christmas with this one.

Where – boutique.stade.fr/boutique



How much – €29

GAA snoods

Go one step further during the pre-season and keep them up to date with all the Premier League fashion by buying them a fantastic snood. O'Neills are selling personalised county snoods – but be warned, you could be setting them up for the wrath of their manager. Snoods, colourful boots and pink gloves all come with a GAA warning of extra laps and sly and regular digs.

Where – Try the O'Neills store, but your best bet is oneills.com
How much – €12

Compression gear

Winter in the GAA is just a horrible time all round. Few matches to watch and, for the players, it's pre-season time. With that in mind, you may as well keep warm when you're head-down grinding it out, swearing to yourself this will be the last year. So do your bit to help the GAA star in your life through the anguish. For starters try out some Atak compression gear. Generally far cheaper than the Under Armour or Skins alternatives, it'll keep the muscles warmed-up and covered from the ankles up.

Where – Buy in sports stores nationwide and at michaelmurphysports.ie
How much – An attack compression shirt €20

€50-€150

Savile Rogue scarves

Make your stand against the half-and-half scarf plague sweeping through football by buying your loved one a Savile Rogue cashmere scarf. With colours and designs



P90x3 programme

If you're looking to drop a hint this Christmas, or politely facilitate a new year's target, sort your loved one out with the ultimate home fitness guide, P90x3 – this stuff is legit. All excuses are whitewashed with world-renowned trainer Tony Horton's latest version of the now infamous P90 series. Thanks to their persistence with the almost subliminal infomercials that now dominate late-night television, assisted by a mention in Bruno Mars' 'Lazy Song', the series' success has now led to the development of this latest "get fit in 30 days, in just 30 minutes a day" programme. All you need is basic equipment, and the workout discs come with a detailed nutrition plan.

Where – Order through the 'Beachbody' page on Amazon.co.uk
How much – €135

Tough Mudder

Everybody goes into the new year with the intention of shedding the mince pies, but it's far easier said than done. So how about having something to work towards without necessarily having to commit to an ironman triathlon in February? Tough Mudder is an endurance event which has become increasingly popular in recent years, and the 10- to 12-mile army-style obstacle course is coming to Dublin in the summer. They say it's as much a test of teamwork as it is stamina, and though it might be a lot wetter and muddier than your standard park 10k, it looks a lot more fun – plus you get a free pint at the end.

Where – toughmudder.co.uk/events
How much – Saturday €89, Sunday €79

GAA Season Ticket

The GAA season ticket covers the whole of the league campaign for any chosen county, as well as their first championship match in the summer. From that point on, the season ticket holder gets first refusal on championship games, with a €10 discount. And if they've used their season ticket for 60 per cent of the team's matches over the course of the year, they can buy an All-Ireland final ticket.

Where – GAA ticket store or www.gaa.ie/seasonticket
How much – €95 for adults, €10 for juveniles.

€150+

Ireland v Gibraltar package

There's a band of Irish supporters who made the trip to Germany back in October and saw John O'Shea score a last-minute winner against the world champions who will forever be able to say "I was there". Ireland face a string of fixtures in 2015 which will decide their European Championship destiny, so why not follow the side abroad as they attempt to make it to France 2016? Gibraltar may not provide as stern an opposition as Germany, but the Algarve, where the match will take place, is far nicer than Gelsenkirchen.

Where – www.clubtravel.ie

How much – €599 (including match ticket)

Leinster rugby school of excellence

With Ireland riding high in the world rankings and gunning for World Cup success next year, there's never been a better time to hone the skills of the next generation. The Leinster rugby school of excellence has been fine-tuning up-and-coming O'Driscolls and Sextons for 17 years and is one Ireland's most successful rugby camps. It was started by former Leinster academy manager and now IRFU high performance manager Colin McEntee and offers positional clinics, as well as guest coaches and sessions with Leinster academy players. There are residential and non-residential courses for boys and girls.

Where – www.leinsterrugby.ie
How much – Non residential €275; residential €375

Ireland v Canada World Cup rugby package

Wales is a rarity in that the nation's main sporting venue is located right in the heart of its capital city. The Millennium Stadium is at the top of St Mary's street in Cardiff, and the proximity of the ground to the pubs means the city is always buzzing on match day. So, it's the perfect stage to watch Ireland start their pursuit of the Webb Ellis Cup against Canada.

Where – www.killestertravel.com
How much – €720 (Two night stay including match ticket)

Ireland v Scotland Six Nations rugby package

If you can't wait until September to watch Joe Schmidt's men on the road, how about a weekend away in Edinburgh in March to watch Ireland's final in their defence of the Six Nations crown? Where – www.trevorbrennanrugby-tours.com
How much – €550 (match tickets and two nights 4-star hotel)

Augusta golf package

The US Masters is arguably golf's most recognisable event and Augusta its most recognisable course. Why not book a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Augusta? It will set you back, but surely the chance to visit the game's greatest amphitheatre to see Rory McIlroy complete the grand slam would be worth every penny?

Where – www.clubtravel.ie
How much – €7,699 (Four-day badge, five nights' accommodation)

Cheltenham festival

If the prospect of watching Cheltenham in your local with a few betting slips doesn't get the juices flowing this year, how about heading across for the festival in 2015? You never know, it might end up not costing you a penny.

Where – www.midlandtravel.ie
How much – €429 (Four-day trip, includes two days' grandstand admission)