

Soccer News

Martinez dismisses Keane's accusations

Keane's willingness to cast doubt on McCarthy's commitment irks Martinez

Everton manager says Irish contingent are not pressured into avoiding internationals

ANDY HUNTER

Roberto Martinez believes Roy Keane has jeopardised James McCarthy's relationship with Republic of Ireland's supporters by questioning the midfielder's commitment to the international cause.

Martinez has dismissed as "nonsense" Keane's claims that Everton's Irish contingent are pressured into avoiding internationals and that the Goodison manager regularly provides bleak injury bulletins to Martin O'Neill. But it was the Republic of Ireland assistant manager's willingness to cast doubt on McCarthy's commitment that has truly irked Martinez.

He views the insinuation as a part of an agenda to distract from Ireland's poor performance in Scotland a week ago and questioned Keane's right to assess any player's commitment by alluding to the former Manchester United captain's chequered history with his country.



Roberto Martinez: "It's completely unfair. I'm sure there is an agenda."

Martinez could aggravate Keane further tomorrow by selecting McCarthy for the home game against West Ham United. The midfielder missed the defeat by Scotland with a grade one hamstring tear suffered at Sunderland and, with two weeks' recovery usually required, is in contention.

Injury

McCarthy has missed the past three qualifiers through injury but, with the midfielder having pledged allegiance to Ireland despite being born in Scotland, his commitment is unquestionable, Martinez believes.

"It's completely unfair," said the Everton manager, who saw Seamus Coleman also dragged into the dispute by Keane. "I'm sure there is an agenda. If there is an issue it should be treated with respect and privately to get to the bottom of it. To make things public could get some Irish fans thinking the players

don't want to play or that Everton have stopped some players from going. That's nonsense. That's just ridiculous. Those players are desperate to play for their country and it's wrong and unfair to put a doubt in the mind of the fans."

Martinez himself was not spared in Keane's latest outburst, with the Irishman claiming the Catalan did not appreciate Ireland's situation because he never played international football. "That's his opinion," he replied. "It's nonsense."

Keane's past

The Everton manager also alluded to Keane's past as a player, including walking out on the eve of the 2002 World Cup, as undermining his authority on the matter.

He said: "I could easily comment on it and it would be an easy target because of his previous as a player but my relationship is with Martin O'Neill and our contact is frequent. We share information and that's how it's going to carry on."

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Forot injury Coleman, meanwhile, played through the Scotland game with five stitches in a foot injury and Darron Gibson has not trained due to a knee problem sustained at Celtic Park.

"We are in an age in football when injuries are black and white," Martinez added. "Players get a scan for everything and it's not a subjective opinion where you think someone is carrying a problem; that's gone out of the game." Guardian Service



Whelan accused of antisemitism

Wigan owner attempts at defending new manager Mackay gets derided

DAVID CONN

Dave Whelan has been accused of antisemitism after the Wigan Athletic owner said he believes that "Jewish people chase money more than everybody else".

A Chinese community leader, Jenny Wong, also said Whelan was condoning racism by saying it is "nothing" to call a Chinese person a "chink".

Whelan was explaining his appointment yesterday of Malky Mackay as Wigan's manager, despite Mackay being currently under investigation by the English FA for alleged racism and antisemitism over his email and text exchanges while in charge of Cardiff City with the club's former head of recruitment Iain Moody.

The three texts or emails Mackay had sent, Whelan said, included one describing the Cardiff City owner, Malaysian Vincent Tan, as a "chink". In another, Mackay referred to the Jewish football agent, Phil Smith, saying: "Nothing like a Jew that sees money slipping through his fingers."

Whelan said he did not think there was "a lot wrong" with anything Mackay said, and there was no malice or disrespect in the statement about Smith. He added: "It's telling the truth. Jewish people love money, English people love money; we all love money."

Whelan said he does not believe the reference to Smith is offensive, first explaining that he believed Mackay was only reflecting that Jewish people "love money" like everybody does. "The Jews don't like losing money. Nobody likes losing money," Whelan said.

Asked whether he did not think what Mackay said was offensive, because the claim that Jews "love money" has been used as a negative stereotype, Whelan said: "Do you think Jewish people chase money a little bit more than we do? I think they are very shrewd people."

United injuries

Blind, Falcao out

Manchester United suffered a double blow yesterday as Daley Blind ruled out for a "long" spell due to a knee problem and Radamel Falcao receiving a "new injury" that will keep him out for at least two more weeks.

Angel de Maria and David de Gea, who suffered foot and finger injuries while away with Argentina and Spain respectively, should be fit for tomorrow's game against Arsenal at the Emirates.

Wong, director of the Manchester Chinese Centre, an organisation devoted to Chinese community cultural understanding, said the word "chink" "is an insult, racist".

Wigan Athletic owner Dave Whelan believes comments made by new manager Malky Mackay (in background) were not offensive.

PHOTOGRAPH: PA

"I remember at school in the 70s a skinhead kicking me, calling me 'chinky, chinky,'" Wong said. "It has stopped now; things have changed for the better. As a football manager, this man should not have said it."

At the top

Whelan told the *Guardian* he has been advised by two "influential" people at the top of the FA that "nothing will come" from the investigation into Mackay, largely because the exchanges were in private communications.

Lord Herman Ousley, the chair of football's antiracism and discrimination organisation Kick It Out, has accused Wigan of "disregarding" the FA investigation, and he said it is "a disgrace" if senior figures at the FA have briefed Whelan that the investigation will not produce charges. Guardian Service

Hurling

Corbett leads tributes to retiring Walsh

EAMON DONOGHUE

"A fierce nice fella off the field, he played a tough game on the field, and there's no getting away from the fact that he's one of the best players that's ever played the game."

Tipperary's Lar Corbett knows Tommy Walsh better than most, the pair have 27 overlapping years of senior inter-county experience between them, with Walsh marking Corbett on numerous occasions and Corbett even marking Walsh in one famous All-Ireland semi-final meeting in 2012.

The tributes have been flooding in for the Kilkenny legend since he announced his retirement yesterday morning. But to receive such acknowledgement from one of his most heralded opponents shows just how highly respected the nine-time All-Ireland winner is.

Always driven

"He's one of the all-time greats, he's probably one of the best players that has ever played the game," said Corbett.

"I think as an individual he was always driven, I mean if you ever heard him speak, he was always driven and he was always 100 per cent behind



Tommy Walsh: won nine All-Ireland medals with Kilkenny

Kilkenny. He never got excited about what he had done as an individual, he was always talking about the team which I think is great...

"He always, always did the simple things right and as they say in any game, all the managers or selectors want you to do is to keep doing the simple things right and enjoy it and keep working hard."

The onetime-time consecutive All Star announced his retirement from the inter-county scene after 13 years yesterday morning.

The 31-year-old who was named GAA/GPA Hurler of the Year in 2009 thanked manager Brian Cody for his loyalty and for believing in him as a player.

My dream

"For the last 13 years I have had the time of my life, lived my dream and have memories that will stay with me forever. I would like to thank Brian Cody for his loyalty throughout all my years with Kilkenny and for believing in me as a player."

"I want to thank the supporters. From day one they showered me with support. I will never forget their continued encouragement, especially in my final year, simply thank you."

Last year Walsh found his playing time limited as Kilkenny won the league title as well as both the Leinster and All-Ireland championships.

"Looking at what Tommy did, he made that number five jersey his own for a decade straight and not a lot of people from Kilkenny, or any county, have done that so let's just give credit where credit is due," added Corbett.

Boxing AIBA Women's World Championship

Taylor left to fly Irish flag as Walsh bows out on a split decision

JOHNNY WATTERSON
in Jeju, South Korea

The Irish team in Korea has never been whittled away to just Katie Taylor, who boxed her quarter-final early this morning against Olympic silver medalist, Russia's Sofya Ochigava.

The bout was, for many of the final and came to pass at the midpoint of the competition because of the decision of the international governing AIBA, not to allow seeding at the championships.

But throughout the week there has been possibly more

disappointment than elation in the Irish camp and yesterday that came continued.

Following Clare Grace having to withdraw because of the freakishly bad cut over her eye, Belfast's young hope Michaela Walsh departed after a bout that rewarded the fighter who refused to blink first.

Deliberate contest

After eight minutes it was Walsh, who narrowly lost her game of chess with Anna Alimardanova. A southpaw counter puncher the Azerbaijan fighter stalked the ring inviting the Bel-

fast girl onto her gloves from the onset.

Walsh cautiously made her moves, her opponent scoring off her when she did. It was a tight, deliberate contest with few real exchanges and none of the orchestral power plays of Katie Taylor and Mira Potkonen in their lightweight bout immediately after.

Alimardanova was comfortable from the first round sitting back and waiting for Walsh to provide targets. Inevitably that happened as the Irish girl was forced to press forward to score

points. It was a game of patience and narrow margins separating the two, both of them flicking out jabs and circling each other looking for ways in to score.

More aggressive

Walsh was the more aggressive throughout and especially in the final round when she brought up the tempo.

She largely had her opponent backing off but Alimardanova had poise and although in reverse a lot of the time did not lose control. The referee had to step in

and tell the two of them to start fighting in the first round, when they were feeling out the lie of the land, which is not uncommon and something Irish Olympic medalist John Joe Nevin was prone to doing when he was a top amateur.



Michaela Walsh: lost out to Azerbaijan fighter on a split decision after a tight contest

But in the end Walsh fell just short, the divided judges awarding the fight to the canny Alimardanova.

"I thought I nicked the first round," said Ireland's Commonwealth Games silver medalist. "She didn't do much. The second round was close. I would have given her the third round and in the fourth round she didn't want to know. I don't know how she got it on a split decision but that's how it goes..."

"I'm gutted," she added. "I lost on a split decision when I was clearly the most dominant boxer and knocked

her down in the last round. Boxing can be cruel."

Alimardanova would argue it was a slip in the last round but the truth is the fight was so close to call and that it fell into the subjective lap of the judges.

Walsh was certainly the most aggressive boxer in the ring but perhaps not so for the entire bout.

Online For live reports on Katie Taylor's quarter-final bout this morning go to irishtimes.com/sport

Sports briefs

Formula One

Schumacher's condition still grave according to Strieff

Michael Schumacher is paralysed and has memory and speech problems from the brain injuries he sustained in a skiing accident, according to Philippe Strieff, a friend and ex-Formula One driver who was himself left in a wheelchair by a crash.

Schumacher, 45, suffered head injuries in the December 2013 fall and was placed in an induced coma by doctors. He was moved to his home in September but Strieff told French radio that the seven-time world champion's condition remained grave.

Strieff, who was paralysed by a crash in 1989, said: "He is getting better but everything is relative. It's very difficult.

He can't speak. "Like me he is in a wheelchair, paralysed. He has memory problems and speech problems."

A spokeswoman for Schumacher said Strieff's comments were "his opinions".

Jean-Francois Payen, one of the doctors who has been treating Schumacher, said in October that he could need years to recover.

"I have noticed some progress but I would say we will have to give him time," Payen, who treated Schumacher at the Grenoble hospital where Schumacher was taken after the accident. "We are in a time scale of one to three years."

Cricket

Sarfraz century gets Pakistan back on track

Sarfraz Ahmed hit a century and Pakistan's spinners wrecked New Zealand's top and middle order to leave the second Test in Dubai nicely poised yesterday.

New Zealand had reduced Pakistan to 287 for eight to appear on course for a healthy first innings lead but Sarfraz (112) added 81 runs for the last wicket to dash their hopes.

By the time New Zealand got the better of Sarfraz's grit, Pakistan had posted 393 runs, finishing 10 behind New Zealand in their first innings. The Kiwis have a lead of 177 and Ross Taylor and Mark Craig return today to try and set Pakistan a difficult target.

Formula One

Vettel confirms a he will join Ferrari on a three-year deal

Sebastian Vettel looked forward to following in Michael Schumacher's Formula One footsteps after Ferrari confirmed yesterday that the four-times world champion would replace Fernando Alonso next season on a three-year deal.

The long-awaited news, an open secret since the German announced in October that he was leaving Red Bull, formally ended a five-year love affair with double world champion Alonso that frustrated both sides.

Vettel will partner Finland's 2007 world champion Kimi Raikkonen, who has a year remaining on his contract. "The next stage of my



Sebastian Vettel: "dream of a lifetime has come through"

Formula One career will be spent with Scuderia Ferrari and for me that means the dream of a lifetime has come true," said Vettel.

"When I was a kid, Michael Schumacher in the red car was my greatest idol and now it's an incredible honour to finally get the chance to drive a Ferrari," he added.

Basketball

Collins announces his retirement

Jason Collins, who made history as the first openly gay active player in the four major US sports leagues, officially retired on Wednesday. He played 13 seasons in the NBA, none more important than his last with the Brooklyn Nets.

Collins announced his retirement through the media. He wrote about his decision in *Sports Illustrated*, which in April 2013 published his coming out story, and in a longer and more intimate account for the *Players'* Tribune, in which he detailed his basketball life since his decision to come out.

Results round-up

Basketball

NBA - Brooklyn Nets 118 Milwaukee Bucks 122. Cleveland Cavaliers 90 Sacramento Spurs 92. Denver Nuggets 107 Oklahoma City Thunder 100. Detroit Pistons 86 Phoenix Suns 88. Houston Rockets 92 LA Lakers 98. Indiana Pacers 88 Charlotte Hornets 86. Minnesota Timberwolves 115 New York Knicks 99. Orlando Magic 90 LA Clippers 114. Philadelphia 76ers 90 Boston Celtics 101. Toronto Raptors 76 Memphis Grizzlies 92. Washington Wizards 102 Dallas Mavericks 105.

Cricket

SECOND TEST (Fourth Day) In Dubai - New Zealand 483 (T Latham 137, Zulfiqar Babar 4-137 & 167-6 (L Taylor 77 not out) v Pakistan 393 (Sarfraz Ahmed 112, Azhar Ali 75, Younus Khan 72).

Equestrian Sport

SHOW JUMPING (in Strazzeete, France) - Jump and derive - 1 Germany's Dutschke 92. Pignation du Rozeil (Julien Epallard) 97.23.3. Germany's Captain Sparrow (Michael Jung) 100.87. ... 5 Ireland's Belmondo (Bertram Allen) 100.47. 1.45m speed - Ireland's Calido Boy (Shane Breen) 0.59.39.2 France's Pignation du Rozeil (Julien Epallard) 0.60.79; 3 USA's Wotsamillion (Laura Kraut) 0.61.41. ... 6 Ireland's Dundee V Dwyer Hagen (Cameron Hanley) 0.62.91.

Gaelic Games

LEINSTER COLLEGES - SHAA League:

Castlecreever CS 3-10 St Peter's, Wexford 1-10. SHB Col Eamonn Ris, Callan 6-14 Grennan Thomastown 1-9. JH semi-final: Ardscoil Ris 4-10 Col Mhuire Johnstonown 2-11. North Leinster Colleges - SHC semi-final: Cistercian Roscrea 5-12 Col Chemil Tullamore 2-05. South Leinster Colleges - SF A League final: Ardscoil na Tríonóide Athy 2-15 Knockbeg College 2-11. Tom Quinlan Plate - Final: Luttrellstown CS 11-08 Danganstown CS 3-03. Tom Quinlan Shield - Section Two final: Moyte Park College 7-10 St. Vincent's CBS 5-07. Dublin Colleges - JH final: Lucan CBS 1-22 Terenure College 3-09.

Soccer

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES COLLEGES FAI Umbro Cup (preliminary round): IT Blanchardstown 4 (S Verdor, D Kehoe, Y Behrout, K Murray) IT Sligo 2 (A Peurto) 2. Colleges FAI - Bob Eustace Cup (preliminary round): IT Carlow-Wexford 1 (S O'Grady) Waterford IT C 9 (R Corcoran, M O'Neil, P Brazzolen, G Macleod, J Graham, C McGonigley) DIT C 4 (S Duggan, 4 Athlone IT C 1 (F O'Shaughnessy) Bray Institute of FE 5 (S DeSouza, 2 R Greene, 2 A Coz) Rathmines College 2 (J Ojo, D Tomiak); Dublin Business School 1 (A Williamson) Carlow Institute of FE 0.

What's on Today

GAELIC GAMES: Leinster Colleges SHB - Mountrath CS v St Fergal's, Rathdowney, Mountrath CS, 11.15; FCD, Bunclody v Wicklow Schools, Bunclody GAA, 12.30. RACING: Dundalk, 5.40. RUGBY: Guinness Pro12 League - Dragons v Munster, Rodney Parade, 7.30; Connacht v Zebre, Sportsground, 7.35; Ulster v Ospreys, Ravenhill, 7.35.