



EGLSF PRESS RELEASE

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## Elite Irish Athlete Comes Out

This week the Irish and UK press has been full of news that one of the great stars of Irish Hurling has come out as gay. Donal Óg Cusack, the Cork Goalkeeper makes the revelation in his autobiography *Come What May*, published today by Penguin Ireland.

Support from the sports governing body the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) has been met by a generally positive response throughout the country by hurling fans. Sandra Gowran, Director of Education Policy at the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network in Ireland says:

“It is fantastic news. The GAA is a stronghold of traditional Ireland, so the support Donal Óg Cusack has received in his sport really shows how far Ireland has come on this issue. It is wonderful for LGBT young Irish people to see someone of such high ranking prominence and with such skill come out as gay.”

Hurling is Europe’s oldest team sport, one of the traditional Gaelic sports which has been chronicled as an Irish pastime for at least 2,000 years. It is a tough, physically challenging game thought to be the world’s fastest team sport in terms of game play.

Despite the generally warm reception Donal Óg (as he is known throughout Ireland) received this week, however, it has not all been a smooth ride. During a match against rivals Tipperary in the summer, one fan began shouting homophobic abuse through a megaphone. It was not an isolated incident. “My mother doesn't go to games any

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more,” Cusack revealed to the press this week. “The stress is too much. My sister Treasa has been deeply upset a few times by what she has heard. I hate what it does to those around me”.

Male Co-President of the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF), Pepe Garcia-Vazquez comments:

“We welcome the news of Donal Óg Cusack’s decision to make public his sexuality. Whilst this is always a decision to be made by individual athletes, we must commend Mr Cusack for his courage. Meanwhile, the EGLSF will continue to work towards a Europe in which all elite LGBT athletes feel safe to come out.”

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