



INTERNATIONAL RUGBY BOARD

SIX NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH PREVIEW

IRELAND



ITALY

Saturday 25th February 2012, KO: 13:30

Aviva Stadium, Dublin

HEADLINES

- RONAN O'GARA will become Ireland's most capped player overtaking Brian O'Driscoll, should he come on as a replacement during the Italy match.
- The halfback pairing of TOBIAS BOTES and EDOARDO GORI is the 30th combination to have played for Italy at Test level since the record-breaking partnership of Diego Dominguez and Alessandro Troncon was broken up with the former's retirement in 2003. Dominguez and Troncon played together 52 times in total, their last match together coming the 13-37 defeat to Ireland during the 2003 Six Nations.
- Ireland has never started a Six Nations campaign with back to back defeats. The last time they suffered that outcome was in 1998 when they lost at home to Scotland and away to France in the old Five Nations.
- Ireland's last win in all competitions was a 36-6 win over Italy in Dunedin during the pool stages of Rugby World Cup 2011.
- Italy's last win in Ireland was a 37-29 victory in the old Lansdowne Road back in 1997. Italy followed that up with a 37-22 win over Ireland at Bologna in December of that year - the last time the Azzurri beat an Ireland team.

SIX NATIONS HISTORY

- RONAN O'GARA became this fixture's highest scorer when he scored 30 points in a 60-13 win over Italy back in 2000.
- Ireland enjoy a better record on the road than they have had at home in recent years, winning six of their last eight championship games whilst winning only five at home.
- RONAN O'GARA is the only player from the two match day squads who was involved in the first Six Nations meeting between these two sides back in 2000.

HEAD TO HEAD

- Ireland has played Italy on 20 occasions previously, with Ireland winning 17 in total. However Italy has yet to beat Ireland since their accession to the Six Nations in 2000.
- Ireland has scored a total of 643 points in those 20 games compared to just 340 points scored by Italy.
- Since 2000, Ireland and Italy have played each other 12 times in the Six Nations, with Italy still to register a first win against them. Ireland has scored 390 points against Italy in Six Nations matches, with the Azzurri scoring just 167.
- Recent matches in Dublin have been closer however in terms of points differential between the teams. There was an average of 26 points difference between the sides in Italy's first three visits to the Irish capital but that has narrowed to 11 points in the last three fixtures between the teams in Dublin.
- Ireland has averaged 26 points per game in their last five Tests against Italy while the visitors have scored on average just under 10 points.
- RONAN O'GARA has scored more points against Italy than any other Irishman (180) while Diego Dominguez holds the record for Italy against Ireland with 96.

2012 6 Nations Records

>> Points

Points	Player
30	Leigh Halfpenny Wales
22	Owen Farrell England
14	Kris Burton Italy

>> Tries

Tries	Player
2	Leigh Halfpenny Wales
2	Jonathan Davies Wales
2	Charlie Hodgson England

All Time Records

>> Points

Points	Player
551	Ronan O'Gara Ireland
546	Jonny Wilkinson England
467	Stephen Jones Wales

>> Tries

Tries	Player
25	Brian O'Driscoll Ireland
24	Ian Smith Scotland
22	Shane Williams Wales



Facts & Figures

STARTING LINEUPS

- Ireland coach Declan Kidney has opted for the same starting XV against Italy as the postponed clash against France at the Stade de France.
- KEITH EARLS was the only change to the side for the postponed France game following the defeat to Wales in Round 1. FERGUS MCFADDEN, who played in the centre against Wales in EARLS' absence, is on the bench.
- Italy coach Jacques Brunel has made four changes to the one that was beaten by England a fortnight ago.
- Fly half TOBIAS BOTES comes in to make his first start for Italy after appearing off the bench in the two previous games against France and England.
- ALBERTO SGARBI returns to the centre in place of GONZALO CANALE, who drops to the bench.
- LORENZO CITTADINI replaces the injured Martin Castrogiovanni at tighthead prop while MICHELE RIZZO comes in at loosehead for Andrea Lo Cicero, to complete an all-Benetton Treviso front row.
- DONNCHA O'CALLAGHAN and PAUL O'CONNELL start a championship game in the second row together for the 22nd time, just one game off the Irish Championship record currently held by Willie John McBride and Mick Molloy.
- TOMMY BOWE needs just one more try to edge Shane Horgan out of third place on the Ireland all-time try scoring table. He currently has 20 tries.
- JONATHAN SEXTON needs just 28 points to break the 200 point barrier point for Ireland.
- Italy replacement GONZALO CANALE will win his 75th cap if he comes off the bench against Ireland.
- Ten of the Italy starting XV are Benetton Treviso players, with combinations in the front row, halfback and in the centre.

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

- Ireland fields a side with 595 caps in total and an average age of 27. Ireland's bench, with an average age of 28, have 216 caps between them.
- Italy has a less experienced side than Ireland with 480 caps in the starting XV while the average age is the same as Ireland's with 27.
- TOMMASO BENVENUTI at 21 is the youngest player on the pitch and will win his 15th cap for Italy against Ireland.

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

- Fly half TOBIAS BOTES will make his first Six Nations start for Italy after appearing off the bench in their first two matches against France and England.
- Benetton Treviso prop MICHELE RIZZO wins his third cap and makes his Six Nations debut against Ireland. He won his first cap for Italy in a 69-21 defeat against Australia back in 2005.
- PETER O'MAHONY is named once again on the replacements bench for Ireland but is yet to make his international debut. The 22 year old Cork Constitution and Munster backrower is the youngest player in the Ireland squad, with starting scrumhalf CONOR MURRAY five months his elder.

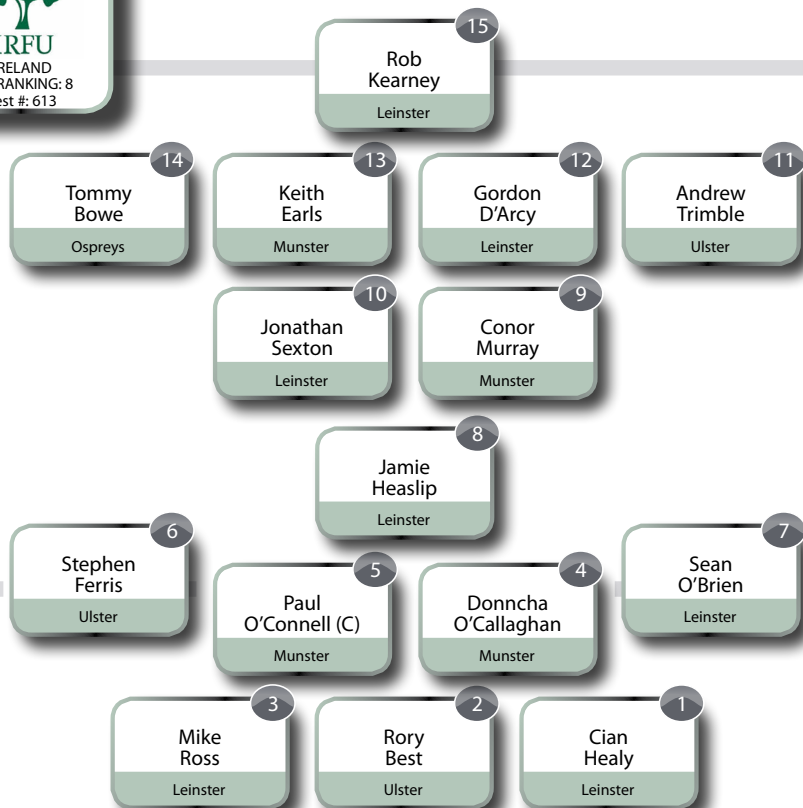
SIZE MATTERS

- Substitute TOM COURT is Ireland's heaviest player at 122kg while DONNACHA RYAN, DONNCHA O'CALLAGHAN AND PAUL O'CONNELL share the honour of being Ireland's tallest player at 1.98m.
- Prop LORENZO CITTADINI is the heaviest player in Italy's match day 22, weighing in at 124kg while second row QUINTIN GELDENHUYS is Italy's tallest, at 2.03m.

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

- CRAIG JOUBERT referees his first international Test since the Rugby World Cup 2011 final between New Zealand and France. The South African made his international debut as a Test referee back in 2003, when he officiated between Namibia and Uganda. He will referee his 32nd Test this weekend.

Team Sheets



Replacements

- 16 Sean Cronin (Leinster)
- 17 Tom Court (Ulster)
- 18 Donnacha Ryan (Munster)
- 19 Peter O'Mahony (Munster)
- 20 Eoin Reddan (Leinster)
- 21 Ronan O'Gara (Munster)
- 22 Fergus McFadden (Leinster)

Key Stats

Caps Starting Lineup: 595
 Avg Age Starting Lineup: 27
 Oldest Player: Ronan O'Gara (34)
 Youngest Player: Peter O'Mahony (22)
 Avg Weight Forwards: 111 kg

Officials

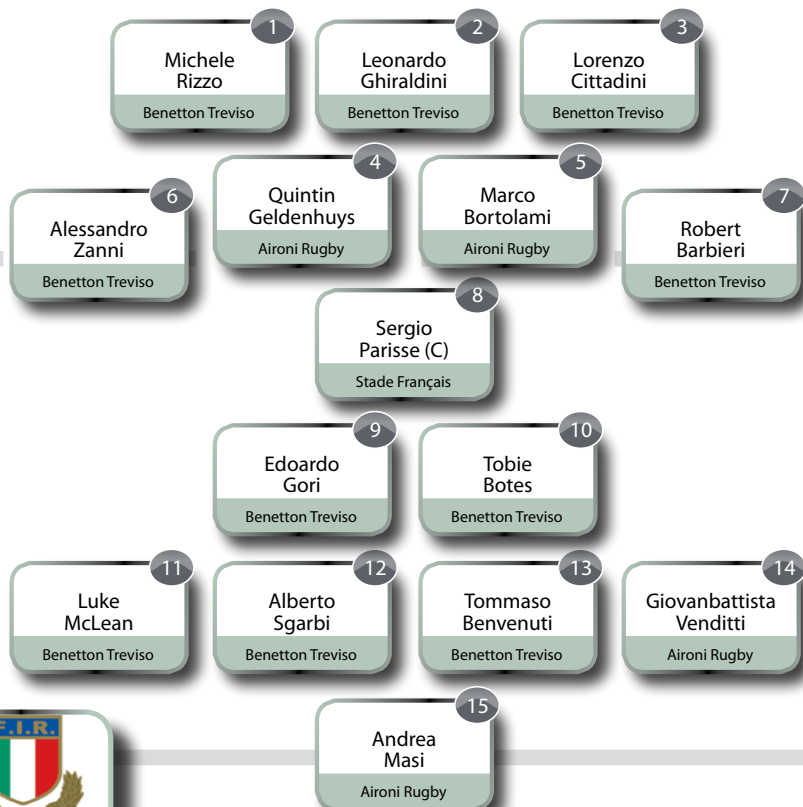
Referee:
 Craig Joubert (South Africa) - 31 Tests

Tests at Venue: 1 Tests
 Ireland: 6 Tests
 Italy: 2 Tests
 Test Debut: 31/08/2003 - Namibia v Uganda

Assistant Referee 1:
 Nigel Owens (Wales)

Assistant Referee 2:
 David Changleng (Scotland)

TV Match Official:
 Nigel Whitehouse (Wales)



Replacements

- 16 Tommaso D'Apice (Aironi Rugby)
- 17 Fabio Staibano (Aironi Rugby)
- 18 Antonio Pavanello (Benetton Treviso)
- 19 Simone Favaro (Aironi Rugby)
- 20 Fabio Semenzato (Benetton Treviso)
- 21 Kris Burton (Benetton Treviso)
- 22 Gonzalo Canale (ASM Clermont Auvergne)

Key Stats

Caps Starting Lineup: 480
 Avg Age Starting Lineup: 27
 Oldest Player: Marco Bortolami (31)
 Youngest Player: Tommaso Benvenuti (21)
 Avg Weight Forwards: 112 kg



Head to Head

Recent Results

Date	Team A	Result	Team B	Venue
02/10/2011	Ireland	36 - 6	Italy	Dunedin
05/02/2011	Italy	11 - 13	Ireland	Rome
06/02/2010	Ireland	29 - 11	Italy	Dublin
15/02/2009	Italy	9 - 38	Ireland	Rome
02/02/2008	Ireland	16 - 11	Italy	Dublin

Summary

Ireland		20 Matches (0 Draw)	Italy	
17	Won		3	
643	Points		340	
69	Tries		28	
45	Conversions		21	
68	Penalties		46	
3	Drop Goals		7	

Player Records

For Ireland against Italy		For Italy against Ireland	
2 Players - 13	Appearances	12 - 2 Players	
Ronan O'Gara - 180	Points	96 - Diego Dominguez	
Denis Hickie - 8	Tries	3 - Paolo Vaccari	
Ronan O'Gara - 30	Conversions	13 - Diego Dominguez	
Ronan O'Gara - 33	Penalties	17 - Diego Dominguez	
Ronan O'Gara - 2	Drop Goals	3 - Diego Dominguez	

Player Records in a Match

For Ireland against Italy		For Italy against Ireland	
Ronan O'Gara on 04/03/2000 - 30	Points	27 - Diego Dominguez on 20/12/1997	
Denis Hickie on 30/08/2003 - 4	Tries	2 - Paolo Vaccari on 04/01/1997	
On 2 Occasions - 6	Conversions	4 - Diego Dominguez on 04/01/1997	
Paul Burke on 04/01/1997 - 8	Penalties	6 - Diego Dominguez on 20/12/1997	
On 3 Occasions - 1	Drop Goals	2 - On 2 Occasions	

Team Records in a Match

For Ireland against Italy		For Italy against Ireland	
On 30/08/2003 - 61	Points	37 - On 2 Occasions	
On 2 Occasions - 8	Tries	4 - On 04/01/1997	
On 2 Occasions - 6	Conversions	4 - On 04/01/1997	
On 04/01/1997 - 8	Penalties	6 - On 20/12/1997	
On 3 Occasions - 1	Drop Goals	2 - On 2 Occasions	



Head Coach: Declan Kidney

Debut: 08/11/2008 v Canada (W 55-0)
 Winning Ratio: 58.97%
 Average Tries per Match: 2.28

Ireland Record Under Declan Kidney

23 Wins	1 Drawn	15 Lost
869 For	Points	648 Against
89 For	Tries	53 Against
68 For	Conversions	40 Against
89 For	Penalties	90 Against
7 For	Drop Goals	11 Against

Recent Matches

Date	Opponent	Result	Venue
05/02/2012	Wales	L 21 23	Dublin
08/10/2011	Wales	L 10 22	Wellington
02/10/2011	Italy	W 36 6	Dunedin
25/09/2011	Russia	W 62 12	Rotorua
17/09/2011	Australia	W 15 6	Auckland
Points For		144	
Points Ag		69	
Tries For		15	
Tries Ag		8	

Player Info For Ireland

Player	Pos	Age	Debut	Caps	Caps as Sub	Caps v Opponent	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points	Tries	Cons	Pens	DGs
Cian Healy	1	24	15/11/2009	26	1	3	12	1	13	5	1	0	0	0
Rory Best	2	29	12/11/2005	55	20	7	32	0	23	30	6	0	0	0
Mike Ross	3	32	23/05/2009	16	2	2	9	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Donncha O'Callaghan	4	32	22/03/2003	81	19	10	49	1	31	5	1	0	0	0
Paul O'Connell (C)	5	32	03/02/2002	83	6	8	49	1	33	30	6	0	0	0
Stephen Ferris	6	26	26/11/2006	31	5	2	17	1	13	10	2	0	0	0
Sean O'Brien	7	25	21/11/2009	16	3	3	10	0	6	10	2	0	0	0
Jamie Heaslip	8	28	26/11/2006	44	3	4	23	1	20	35	7	0	0	0
Conor Murray	9	22	13/08/2011	7	3	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Jonathan Sexton	10	26	21/11/2009	25	8	2	12	0	13	172	1	16	43	2
Andrew Trimble	11	27	19/11/2005	42	11	5	22	0	20	45	9	0	0	0
Gordon D'Arcy	12	32	15/10/1999	64	9	10	42	0	22	35	7	0	0	0
Keith Earls	13	24	08/11/2008	26	6	3	14	1	11	55	11	0	0	0
Tommy Bowe	14	28	20/11/2004	45	0	4	24	1	20	100	20	0	0	0
Rob Kearney	15	25	02/06/2007	34	3	4	16	1	17	37	7	1	0	0
Total				595	99	68	334	8	253	569	80	17	43	2
Sean Cronin	16	25	21/11/2009	15	9	2	9	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Tom Court	17	31	15/02/2009	25	19	4	14	0	11	0	0	0	0	0
Donnacha Ryan	18	28	22/11/2008	14	11	2	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Peter O'Mahony	19	22		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eoin Reddan	20	31	11/02/2006	38	19	4	16	0	22	5	1	0	0	0
Ronan O'Gara	21	34	19/02/2000	117	30	13	70	2	45	1075	16	175	200	15
Fergus McFadden	22	25	05/02/2011	7	2	1	2	0	5	10	2	0	0	0

Records For Ireland

Caps

117 - Brian O'Driscoll
 117 - Ronan O'Gara
 105 - John Hayes

Tries

45 - Brian O'Driscoll
 29 - Denis Hickie
 21 - Shane Horgan

Points

1075 - Ronan O'Gara
 560 - David Humphreys
 308 - Michael Kiernan

Player Records (In a Match)

Points: 32 - Ronan O'Gara v Samoa on 20/06/2003
 Tries: 4 - 3 players
 Conversions: 10 - 2 players
 Penalties: 8 - Paul Burke v Italy on 04/01/1997
 Drop Goals: 2 - 9 players

Team Records (In a Match)

Points: 83 v USA on 10/06/2000
 Tries: 13 v USA on 10/06/2000
 Conversions: 10 on 2 Occasions
 Penalties: 8 v Italy on 04/01/1997
 Drop Goals: 2 on 11 Occasions



Head Coach: Jacques Brunel

Debut: 04/02/2012 v France (L 12-30)
 Winning Ratio: 0.00%
 Average Tries per Match: 1.00

Recent Matches

0 Wins	0 Drawn	2 Lost
27 For	Points	49 Against
2 For	Tries	5 Against
1 For	Conversions	3 Against
4 For	Penalties	6 Against
1 For	Drop Goals	0 Against

Date	Opponent	Result	Venue
11/02/2012	England	L 15 19	Rome
04/02/2012	France	L 12 30	St Denis
02/10/2011	Ireland	L 6 36	Dunedin
27/09/2011	USA	W 27 10	Nelson
20/09/2011	Russia	W 53 17	Nelson
Points For		113	
Points Ag		112	
Tries For		15	
Tries Ag		12	

Player Info For Italy

Player	Pos	Age	Debut	Caps	Caps as Sub	Caps v Opponent	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points	Tries	Cons	Pens	DGs
Michele Rizzo	1	29	25/06/2005	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Leonardo Ghiraldini	2	27	11/06/2006	43	10	5	10	0	33	15	3	0	0	0
Lorenzo Cittadini	3	29	02/02/2008	10	7	1	2	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
Quintin Geldenhuys	4	30	13/06/2009	27	3	3	7	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
Marco Bortolami	5	31	23/06/2001	90	11	9	27	1	62	35	7	0	0	0
Alessandro Zanni	6	28	12/11/2005	60	18	7	17	1	42	10	2	0	0	0
Robert Barbieri	7	27	11/06/2006	18	5	1	5	0	13	5	1	0	0	0
Sergio Parisse (C)	8	28	08/06/2002	85	3	9	24	1	60	43	8	0	0	1
Edoardo Gori	9	21	20/11/2010	11	4	2	4	0	7	10	2	0	0	0
Tobie Botes	10	27	04/02/2012	2	2	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	0
Luke McLean	11	24	21/06/2008	35	5	4	7	0	28	59	4	0	13	0
Alberto Sgarbi	12	25	10/02/2008	15	3	1	3	0	12	0	0	0	0	0
Tommaso Benvenuti	13	21	13/11/2010	14	2	1	5	0	9	20	4	0	0	0
Giovanbattista Venditti	14	21	04/02/2012	2	0	0	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0
Andrea Masi	15	30	26/08/1999	66	10	8	18	0	48	65	13	0	0	0
Total				480	84	51	129	3	348	270	45	0	14	1
Tommaso D'Apice	16	23	13/08/2011	5	5	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Fabio Staibano	17	28	11/06/2006	9	6	1	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Antonio Pavanello	18	29	09/06/2007	4	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Simone Favaro	19	23	20/06/2009	7	4	0	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Fabio Semenzato	20	25	12/02/2011	10	2	1	2	0	8	5	1	0	0	0
Kris Burton	21	31	02/06/2007	11	4	1	2	0	9	23	0	4	4	1
Gonzalo Canale	22	29	23/08/2003	74	7	9	23	1	50	35	7	0	0	0

Records For Italy

Caps
101 - Alessandro Troncon
93 - Andrea Lo Cicero
90 - Marco Bortolami

Tries
25 - Marcello Cuttitta
22 - Paolo Vaccari
21 - Carlo Checchinato

Points
983 - Diego Dominguez
483 - Stefano Bettarello
294 - Luigi Troiani

Player Records (In a Match)
Points: 29 - 3 players
Tries: 4 - 2 players
Conversions: 12 - Luigi Troiani v Czech Republic on 18/05/1994
Penalties: 8 - 2 players
Drop Goals: 3 - 2 players

Team Records (In a Match)
Points: 104 v Czech Republic on 18/05/1994
Tries: 16 v Czech Republic on 18/05/1994
Conversions: 12 v Czech Republic on 18/05/1994
Penalties: 8 on 2 Occasions
Drop Goals: 3 on 3 Occasions