

GOALS | INTERNATIONAL

SunSport columnists are the talk of football

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HAND OF FROG . . . the infamous Thierry Henry handball

Shame on FAI for accepting Fifa's money

TWO wrongs don't make a right and the FAI are a disgrace for accepting Fifa's hush money.

The story that the FAI got €5million to silence them about Thierry Henry's handball that cost us a potential World Cup place was one of the few times that football has truly shocked me.

I write that as someone who has a cynical view of most football authorities — and with good reason.

Fifa's indiscretions are coming out in the wash but does anyone believe the corruption at the top has not filtered down? That there are not some rotten federations out there?

I cannot believe the FAI accepted the money because it makes all the complaints, the injustice felt by every Irish fan, OK in the eyes of those who run football.

Remember Damien Duff crying as he walked off the pitch? I am sure fans were the same in the stands.

Taking the money says the FAI are OK with that.

That John Delaney (right) wanted to take a legal case — even though I'm not sure how — doesn't bother me as I wish someone would clean up football.

But to then say, 'No, it's OK, just give us the money and change nothing' means you are no better than the rest.

From top to bottom, football is filled with cheating.

It is in the game's DNA and always has been.

Not all of it would get you on the FBI's most-wanted list, and claiming a throw-in when you know the ball hit you last is cheating too.

Football, as a game at all levels, is as much about skill, strength and ability as it is about how you can a ref. So,

Ireland just like Villa - crippled by a fear of failure

THIS is NOT a dig at Roy Keane, but Ireland remind me of Paul Lambert's Aston Villa.

Villa under Lambert were a team that played with fear. They were like that long before Keaney became assistant manager there, so I am not saying he is the common denominator.

What concerns me about Ireland is that we never even look like we can score goals.

Apart from John O'Shea's goal in Germany, we created nothing there and it was the same in Scotland.

Even against Poland at home, what did we create? Three or four chances in a home game we had to win.

O'Shea said something similar during the week. He thinks Ireland need to be more positive and score goals when they are on top.

As a team, you look through our players and wonder where the goals could come from.

Robbie Keane will always get a chance, but he's 34 and not here today for the England game. The other strikers are sporadic rather than prolific scorers. But our biggest problem is in

Tony Cascarino

OUR COLUMNISTS TELL IT TO YOU STRAIGHT

midfield because we have no one there who you'd fancy to nab a goal.

Glenn Whelan has two international goals, while James McCarthy has none.

In fairness, neither is underperforming in the goal stakes because neither gets forward.

It was the same at Aston Villa under Lambert. His team was set up not to take risks, meaning players such as Fabian Delph never got forward or scored.

Tim Sherwood arrived and immediately injected some positivity and, all of a sudden, Delph was like a new player and they began to attack.

That is what I hope for from Ireland, especially at home, and what I expect from any Martin O'Neill side.

Martin made his name at Leicester, Celtic and Villa by sending teams out to attack. It

was not always pretty, but it had you on the edge of your seat as his teams got bodies in the box and frightened the opposition.

When I think of my best days with Ireland, that was basically how we played too.

It got the fans behind us, got everyone fired up, and a lot of opponents did not like it one bit.

But Martin became too tactical when at Sunderland. They were far more cautious than I thought one of his teams would ever be.

The pure joy that his sides used to play with seemed to be missing and it ended up costing him his job when the Black Cats were in relegation trouble.

With Ireland, there's been too much tactics and not enough attacking.

We now look like we're going out not to lose rather than trying to win.

against Scotland just seven days away. I hope to see a change in ethos today against England.

Playing England will always be a big occasion for us — I loved every game I played against them and I never lost one!

But I'd be happier losing 3-1 and having a go today than lose 1-0 or draw 0-0 and play the way we have recently.

This is all about warming up for Scotland and showing we have mentality to beat them. That means going out and attacking.

England are a bloody good side, a lot better than Scotland. But we cannot get away from the fact that our big game is next Saturday.

This is only a warm-up.

If we don't change our tactics, we won't get better than a 0-0 against Scotland and it's wins we need to go to Euro 2016.

MY TEAM



RARE GEM . . . John O'Shea beats Mats Hummels to equalise against Germany

A RIOT OFF

THE safest place to be when England were last at Lansdowne Road was on the pitch.

I can vouch for that as I was a substitute and it was dangerous going to warm up in front of the England fans.

All of us subs ended up on the pitch as the seats were being thrown. It was surreal. The atmosphere was bad, but it still caught me by surprise when it all kicked off.

I have plenty of experience of the dark days of English football hooliganism — I was a fan when Millwall travelled to Luton for what is regularly called the worst day of football violence.

But I honestly did not see it coming at Lansdowne in 1995 and I was warming up, itching to get involved as it looked like a game we would win.

I hope, and believe, that we have all moved on since. Prince Charles was in the west of Ireland last month, Queen Elizabeth was over a few years ago and the Ireland-England rugby games are what they should be — sporting occasions and nothing more.

I am sure this game will be the same.

FEAR FACTOR . . . Irish No 2 Roy Keane also worked with Paul Lambert at Aston Villa