

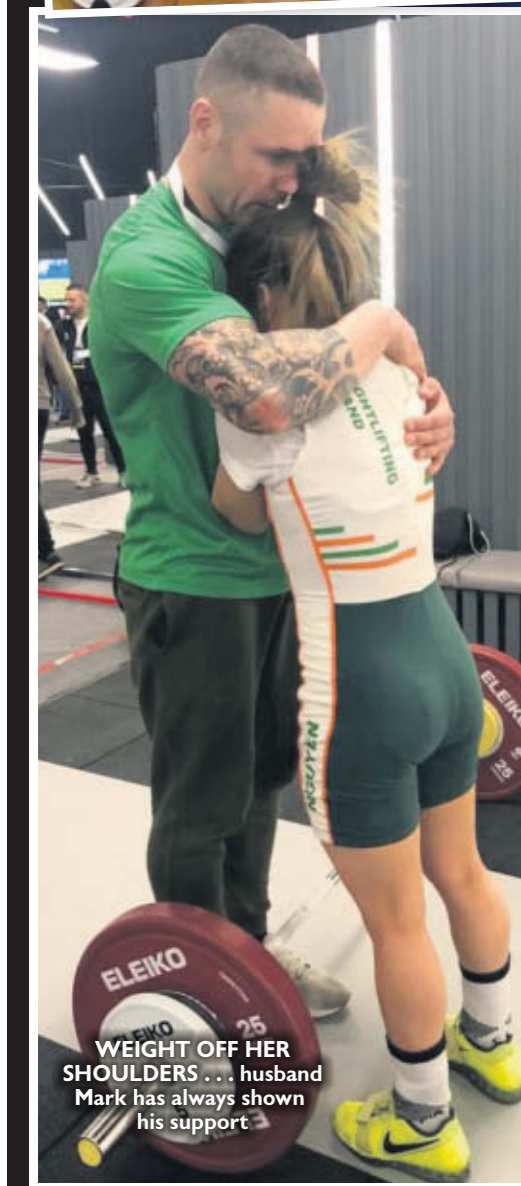
TOKYO STAR'S SISTER HAS HER OWN OLYMPIC AIM

WEIGHT AND SEE

Joining brother Nhat in Paris would be major lift for Thammy



SIBLING COMRADERY... weightlifter Thammy wants to join badminton star Nhat in Paris



WEIGHT OFF HER SHOULDERS... husband Mark has always shown his support

YES, there was pride but Thammy Nguyen experienced another feeling when she saw younger brother Nhat at the last Olympics.

She recalled: "The moment he walked out for the Opening Ceremony, I was in my sitting room and my hands were shaking. "I had this horrible feeling in my throat, a lump, and I said to myself, 'You should have been there, why are you not there with him?' I kind of resented myself because that was one goal that I'd never achieved."

It is not an idle boast. Nor is the thought of being an Olympian a wistful daydream never to be realised. Over the course of more than hour in her company, she did her best to convince me of the merits of manifesting – the belief you can think your dreams into reality. Clearly, it has worked for her, although I still struggle to think of goals as anything other than two posts and a crossbar.

Last Sunday, Thammy, 26, claimed Ireland's first weightlifting medal at a European Championships when she took bronze in the 49kg category in Armenia. There is still work to do to reach the Olympics. The top 10 in the rankings – but only one from each country – plus one more from each continent will compete in Paris. Thammy is currently third in the latter category but, with the World Championships to follow in Saudi Arabia in September, she is confident of making it. It would be another remarkable achievement given her five years out of the sport during which time she brought two kids Lily, 4, and Marc, 2, and several businesses into this world. More on that later because, to really understand what drives the Dubliner, you have to go back, not to the moment she saw her badminton star brother on TV from Tokyo, but 4,500km south-west of the Japanese capital to the Vietnamese countryside. There, their parents were eking out an existence as agricultural labourers thinking

By **NEIL O'RIORDAN**
CHIEF SPORTS WRITER

there must be a better option. Dad Lai and Thammy, then aged six, were first to move to Ireland, originally settling in Belturbet. She wells up when she thinks of the family separation and said: "It was heart-breaking. I had a hard time growing up. I was missing myself at six because my dad, any job he could get, he would take."

It was another two years before Mam Thuy and Nhat could join them. The reunification may have been an emotional salve but making ends meet was still a struggle. In second class, without the means to buy the requisite runners she was unable to do P.E. until a kindly teacher gave her a pair. She said: "Miss Maher, I don't know where she is now. She was one of the best teachers I ever had. She bought me presents because she saw how hard it was for us." An invitation to join a gymnastics club had to be declined as it was a half-hour drive away with no means of getting there. The regret endures. She said: "I believe that I could have made it somewhere because in gymnastics you need to be aggressive, fast and small and I am." It helps to explain why she resolved that she was not going to let another opportunity pass her by. She had stumbled across weightlifting in a gym, told by Warren Campion in CrossFit DSC in Finglas that she had a natural talent. Having looked up at what was being lifted in the European Juniors, she realised she had the numbers. But, like many minority sports in Ireland, access to adequate funding, coaching and facilities was an issue. Push came to shove. She recalled: "I was doing eyelashes to fund myself to compete for Ireland, taking three, four or five hours a day to train, and having to cancel clients. It hit me one day,

"Imagine I sprain my ankle or break my leg, who will pay for that?" I made the decision to stop, at 19, after the Junior Worlds. I left the sport and it hurt. "If I had a national training centre when I was 16 or 17, I guarantee you I would be an Olympian by now. "If I can do this now after only 18 months, if I had the facilities, the training team, the equipment and system I have now I believe I could probably have an Olympic medal because I have that much fight in me." Instead of that path, hers saw her go from doing people's eyelashes to opening salons with employees, bringing out her own product range, opening her own Cross-Fit gym and launching a clothing range. It is an impressive portfolio, one which she again puts down to her life experience which saw her assume responsibilities which a child would not normally have. She said: "My mam and dad didn't have much English so I'd be going to all of Nhat's parent-teacher meetings, making sure everything was OK, from the age of 12. "Them getting me to translate stuff when I was younger annoyed me but if I hadn't done that I wouldn't have gained all the experience and knowledge that I have. "I knew how to apply for a Passport, to get a PPS number. I had no choice. That led me to where I am today." She was managing their parents' take-away – Clare Hall Chinese – from the age of 15 or 16. When they looked set to accede to Nhat's request to quit school early to concentrate on badminton, she intervened. He sat his Leaving Cert. She said: "Nhat is four years younger. I'm very protective over Nhat, very, very protective over Nhat." He had his own experiences of the family's relative poverty – initially having to borrow a shirt to play badminton – but was, to some degree, shielded from the daily grind. The Covid-19 pandemic was, Thammy reckons, an eye-opener for him, extracting him from his athlete's bubble to see just how hard his parents had worked to give him the platform to try to realise his poten-



FOUND HER PLATES... Thammy Nguyen quit weightlifting at 19 but returned to the sport after being inspired by Olympian brother Nhat



MEDAL WIN... Thammy hails bronze success with (l-r) Weightlifting Ireland president Peter Carroll, husband Mark, children Marc and Lily, aunt Chinh, mother Thuy, cousin Ngan, Colm Brown and Phil Brown of Weightlifting Ireland and her coach Faizal Baharom

tial. She explained: "He was doing deliveries in the car during Covid – people never knew an Olympian was delivering Chinese to their door – but I'd been doing that since I was 17. "He was like, 'I'm so tired' and I'm like, 'Shut up, you just have to do it, they need you.'" The extra year the postponement of the Games brought was well spent. The restrictions did not preclude Nhat from using his sister's otherwise-closed gym in Baldoyle where he marked out a badminton court, practising with their dad, a keen player in his day. Thammy said: "I did try out badminton but I'm just not an aerobic person, I can't run, I'm more explosive, I'm type two muscle and he is type one." Currently ranked 32nd in the world, Nhat won one and lost one match in Tokyo, the first of what he hopes could be up to five Olympic Games appearances. For Thammy, it is Paris or bust as she has brought Malaysian coach Faizal Baharom – who competed at the Athens Games in 2004 – to Dublin to guide her. He is paid for out of her pocket. She is hugely appreciative of the efforts of the volunteers in Weightlifting Ireland but, as an underdeveloped national governing body, it received just €55,000 in Sport Ireland funding last year. The €3,000 she received last month through the Olympic Federation of Ireland's Make A Difference Fund – spent on a training camp in Budapest – was the first funding she has received. Her podium finish last week is likely to result in assistance from Sport Ireland with Thammy keen to avail of the National Sports Campus's facilities. She said: "I'm training in an industrial unit, and it's absolutely Baltic. "I would love to go and train somewhere warmer and to be surrounded by elite athletes to push me even more."

A European medal is a decent driver too. She said: "I ask myself this question all the time 'Why am I doing this?' Because it's so hard, I come home crying and stressed. "I put all of this effort in and where's my reward? The bronze medal was my reward. "You can never try this again. I'm 26 and the peak in this sport is probably 27 or 28. "Your peak age comes once and afterwards can you really try and peak naturally, without taking stuff? "If I didn't do it, it would haunt me for the rest of my life, more than anything else. "Part of me already regrets leaving so young. If I can do this now imagine if I was younger, when my recovery would be better and faster and I didn't have all of these responsibilities. "But had I not left to set up my businesses to be able to fund myself I wouldn't be able to be where I am. "I always said when the time's right I'll come back to weightlifting but I didn't know when."

childbirth might affect a weightlifter's body – none of her competitors are mothers – is met with an upfront reply. She said: "I have to wear a nappy when I compete. "When I said this to other people they laughed at me but I don't care. My first birth was natural so that obviously stretched my pelvic floor out. "Whenever I do a lot of jumps, especially really heavy squats as I clean and jerk, it hits my pelvic floor and I pee. "It's quite embarrassing a topic to talk about but it's the reality. "I'm not ashamed about it, I'll probably bring out my own brand of nappy when I stop competing." It is accompanied by a laugh but I am not sure she is joking. In fact, she is so deadly serious you wonder how she might cope if, for once, a goal cannot be achieved. She replied: "You don't understand the aggression I have towards myself, how goal-driven



FUTURE STARS... a young Nhat and Thammy before they excelled in sport

25 YEARS ON, SHELS AND

DERRY CITY MEET AGAIN



ALWAYS REMEMBERED... stats king Conor O'Dowd sadly passed away three days before the 1997 FAI Cup final

By **NEIL O'RIORDAN**
CHIEF SPORTS WRITER

TONY O'DOWD was back at Richmond Park, with Derry City, and had an idea of what to expect from The Shed.

He said: "It was, 'O'Dowd, you f***ing w****, you p****, you f***ing b*****".
"Someone said, 'There's no need for that abuse' and then someone else said, 'They're his brothers giving it to him'."

The goalkeeper did not doubt it was Declan and Conor, saying: "You know League of Ireland, especially back then, you could pick out faces in the crowd and you're nearly having a one-to-one with whoever is giving you abuse."
"They didn't hold back. They were mad."

Declan and Conor had become St Pat's fans when Tony had joined the club in 1992. They stayed put when he moved to Derry in 1995.

Tony said: "When St Pat's would beat you, Conor would be saying, 'You're f***ing s****e, the best thing we ever did was get rid of you' sort of thing, all friendly banter."

With the Inchicore outfit winning the league that season he was a soft target but Derry did so the following year.

When St Pat's regained the title in 1998, it was dedicated by manager Pat Dolan to Conor, who had passed away in the meantime.

However, despite him being a Saints diehard, it is the 1997 FAI Cup final between the Candystripes and Shelbourne which is synonymous with Conor.

And it is why there is a poignancy about this year's decider, 25 years on.

Although Tony also played for Shels, twice, his colours are firmly nailed to the mast, perhaps because of what happened.

And he said: "The gear they're wearing, it's a retro jersey of the one we won the league in."

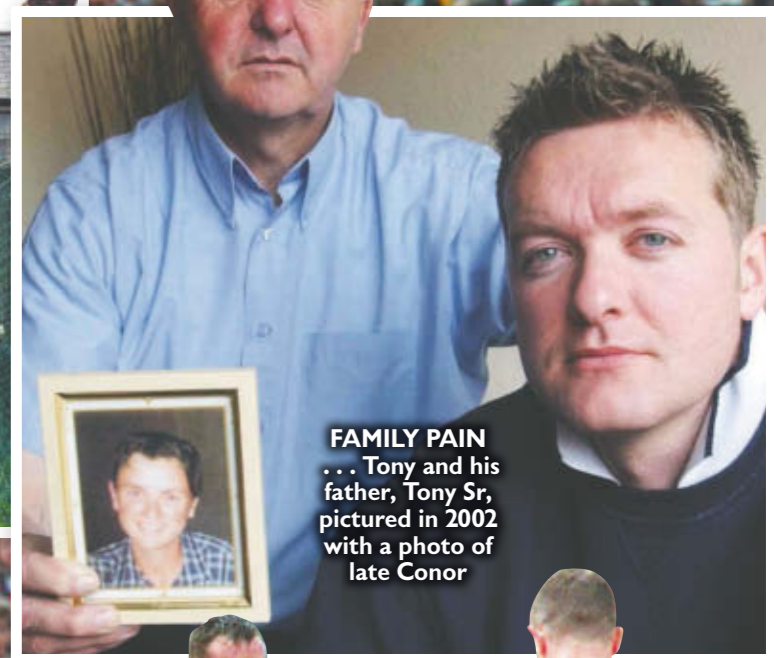
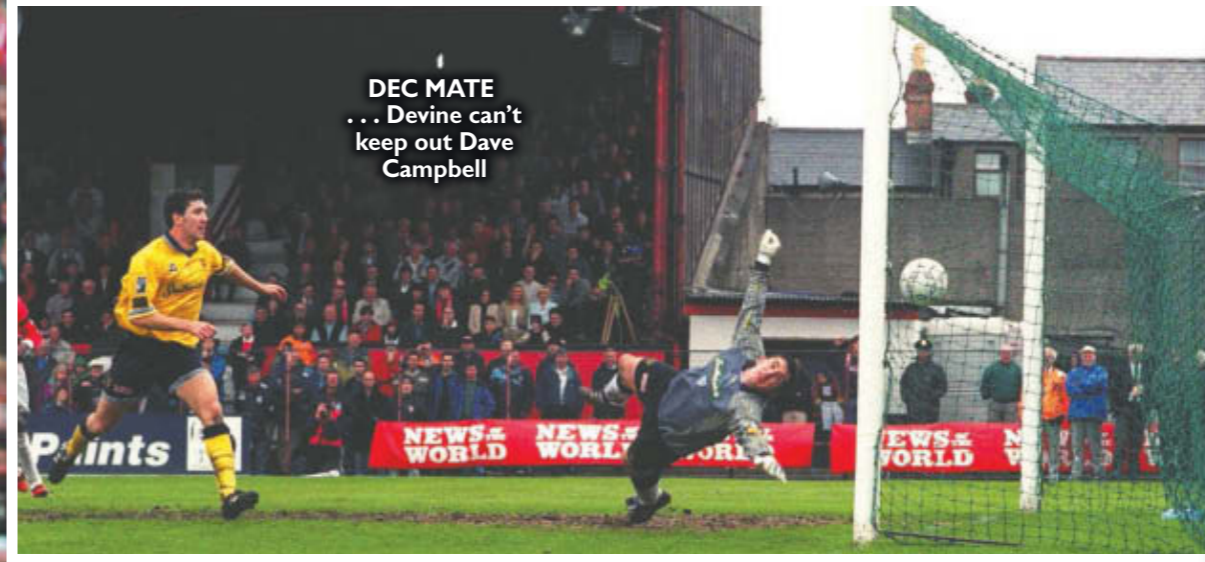
"It would be weird if they won the Cup having come second in the league whereas we won the league and were runner-ups in the Cup. I think it's maybe just fate that they're going to win it."

Conor was the youngest of

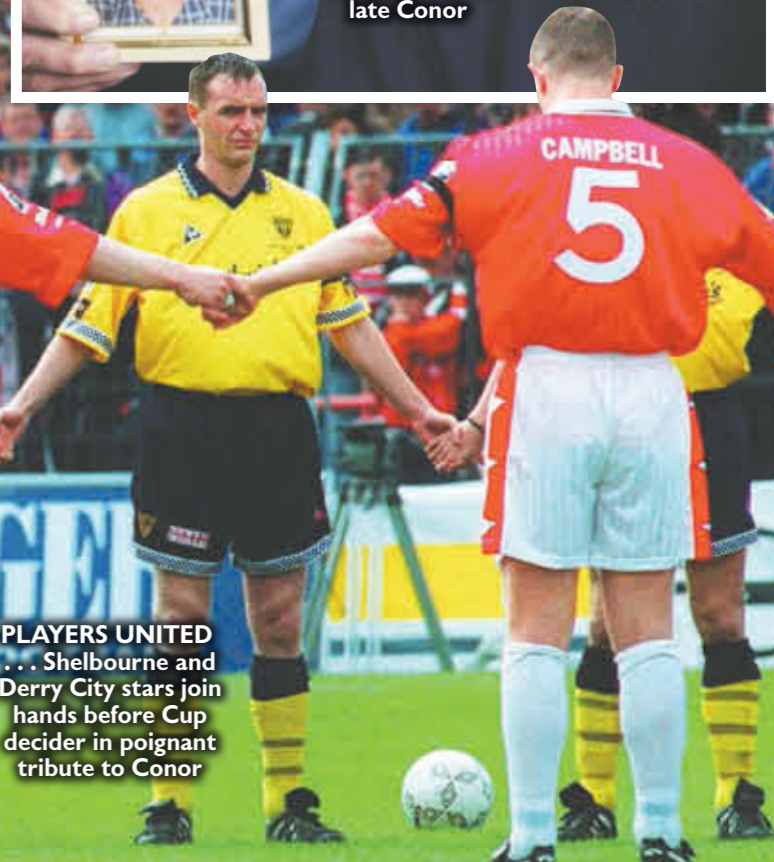
I can remember it like it was yesterday, the four brothers

TONY RECALLS TRAGIC LOSS OF SIBLING CONOR ON THE EVE OF DECIDER

STRENGTH AT THE BACK... Tony O'Dowd in action for Derry City, a few months after brother's untimely death



FAMILY PAIN... Tony and his father, Tony Sr, pictured in 2002 with a photo of late Conor



PLAYERS UNITED... Shelbourne and Derry City stars join hands before Cup decider in poignant tribute to Conor

the four O'Dowd brothers with an age range of less than eight years.

Tony said: "I don't know what celebration there was for my Ma and Da every 2½ years but that's the way it worked out."

The oldest two showed enough promise in their youth to be signed by English clubs. Tony went to Leeds and Greg to Brighton.

The footballing genes got diluted along the way.

Tony said: "Conor was brutal, terrible. He was a real statto, loved everything about football, he could tell about any player and where he came from, this was kind of before the internet so he'd be going through Shoot and Match magazine."

"But he couldn't kick snow off a rope." Despite that, he was part of

a family kick-about at Stewart's Hospital near their Palmerstown house on the evening of Thursday, May 1, three days before the final.

Greg, by now, was doing his stuff for Coleraine.

Tony was one of four Dubliners-along with Tommy Dunne, James Keddy and Richie Purdy - who travelled up and down to Derry as Peter 'Pizza' Hutton's 15 goals from midfield helped Felix Healy's side romp home to the title.

They finished ten points ahead of runners-up Bohemians and a further three clear of Shels, the side they were expected to beat in the Cup final. They did not but it scarcely mattered because of what happened in the build-up.

Tony said: "Twenty-five years is a long time ago but I can remember it like it was yesterday, the four brothers."

"It was just a few shots on me, a few crosses, nothing major. "Conor literally just hit the deck. I caught him out of the corner of my eye."

In a quirk of fate, one of the paramedics who attended the scene was then-Bohs keeper Dave Henderson but it was already too late.

Tony said: "At the time there was

a lot of talk about players swallowing their tongues.

"We just thought it was that, and we had his mouth open, but I think he was gone straight away. His heart was really enlarged and it was bang."

"He was never ill, never complained about his heart, never detected obviously. The doctors were saying it could literally have happened at any time."

"Another way to look at it was the three of us were there with him. It could have happened walking down the street and there would have been no one there with him."

"He was a great lad, your youngest brother, what can you say? Your brother

is your brother." The autopsy confirmed it was Sudden Adult Death Syndrome.

Tony and the other brothers - and, later, their children - all had to undergo heart checks.

If that was another concern, the initial emotion was numbness, preparations for the showpiece match of Irish football and a burial, the following day, now intertwined.

Derry were just one game from being the first side to win a Double since the Candystripes' Treble of 1999 but boss Healy - a member of that team - said: "As far as I'm concerned I'm going to Dublin for a funeral, not a Cup final."

Nevertheless, the match went ahead with Healy forced to make

contingency plans. Declan Devine had been between the posts when Glentoran won the Irish Cup in 1996.

He had not entertained the thought of playing in the FAI Cup decider a year later and nor did he want to.

Devine recalled: "It was a difficult part of my career because my knees were gone and I hadn't played a competitive game in 12 to 13 weeks."

"Tony had such a good season that if we went 1-0 up, we always felt we would see the game out."

"We won the league with a few weeks to spare so celebrations had died down and here we were going for a Double."

"I vividly remember the phone call. We'd no mobiles so it was the house phone and Felix told me to sit down and told me what happened."

"My thoughts weren't about whether or not I was going to play. "We all know what it's like to lose a family member but your younger brother in training..."

Healy left the decision over whether or not he would play to Tony himself, but given he had said he had never seen anyone so dis-

tressed, it seemed unlikely, O'Dowd recalled: "My Da wanted me to play. I was seriously thinking about playing but I just didn't think it would be right."

"I felt if I made a mistake - now anyone could make a mistake and I made loads of mistakes - and lost the Cup final for Derry, I'd never forgive myself."

"Then it would be maybe thrown back on Felix, 'He should never have been playing, it was obvious he was not going to be in the right frame of mind', nothing to do with the fact you could make a mistake at any time."

Instead, he took his seat in the stand, the toll his loss had taken on him all too evident.

Shels won 2-0 with goals

from Dave Campbell and Stephen Geoghegan.

Devine said: "I wanted nothing more to win so I could give the medal to Tony but we were just flat."

"I've been involved in a few Cup finals and there's a real brightness and enjoyment about your morning."

"It wasn't like that that day. There was a cloud hanging over us. "The game just paled into insignificance and it showed in our performance."

Ultimately, it was how those at the club conducted themselves off the pitch that counted.

O'Dowd said: "The team, the Dublin lads, Felix and Pizza, coming up to the house, the way the club looked after me, they were very

good, as were the people of Derry. That's what you remember."

"Felix was brilliant with me but even better with my Ma and Da. To this day, they still appreciate what he did for them."

"My wife was pregnant so I didn't know what it was like to be a father."

"He was obviously a father and talking to my father, he was able to relate to them."

Aisling gave birth to Aaron, now an up-and-coming referee, that summer and Tony said: "It was a definite blessing. My mother was looking after him. Maybe that's what got her through."

"You're a parent yourself, you can only imagine it. You'd never get over it. It was hard enough being my brother but I can only put myself in their place, I'm sure I'd be a zombie for a few years."

"The support from the wider football community also helped."

For the final, both sides had worn black armbands with a minute's silence briefly interrupted by applause as the players linked hands.

It was not the last time people reached out. To this day, when the family visit Conor's grave on his anniversary they notice new St

Pat's memorabilia and flowers have been left.

As well as dedicating their title triumph to Conor, the Inchicore club erected a plaque in his honour beside the dressing rooms at Richmond Park.

O'Dowd said: "There are probably young fans and players who ask what the plaque is for and then they get the story behind it."

"Different strokes for different folks but we like to keep his memory alive and talk about him rather than 'don't mention the war' type of thing."

The empathy stretched beyond Conor's own club.

He said: "A good few supporters from every club contacted me. "The whole league really got behind me and my family. It's not the way you'd like to feel something like that but it was a great help."

"Games when I came back the next season there were fans coming up to me to say they were sorry for months afterwards."

"They probably shook my hand, consoled me and then ten minutes afterwards were giving me abuse but that's fair enough, that's football."

Conor, you suspect, would not have wanted it any other way.

When St Pat's would beat you, Conor would be saying, 'You're f* * * king s* * * e ... all friendly banter'

It was just a few shots on me, a few crosses, nothing major - Conor literally just hit the deck

My Da wanted me to play. I was seriously thinking about it but I just didn't think it would be right

ITALIA '90 VETERAN NOT DONE WITH WORLD CUP



CHRISTINE and William Hughton have lived in the same East London home for more than six decades.

In 1990, the Limerick-born mother - now 86 - watched on with pride as their son represented her country at a World Cup. Later this year, Hughton will similarly honour his 94-year-old father William, originally from Accra. In January, Hughton was on a planned holiday to Ghana with his wife Cheryl. Three days earlier, Milovan Rajevac was dismissed as the Black Stars coach after a meek group-stage exit from the African Cup of Nations. Within a fortnight, Hughton was appointed as technical advisor to the interim coaching team headed up by Otto Addo. After they successfully negotiated the World Cup play-off with Nigeria in March, the staff were retained. While there have been two AFCON qualifiers since, with two more to come in September, to occupy their attention, Qatar looms large on the horizon. Just last week, the former Tottenham full-back was in the country to check on facilities ahead of the finals. If that was to deal with the practicalities pertaining to a professional

By NEIL O'RIORDAN
CHIEF SPORTS WRITER

role, it is hard to escape the sentimentality of the son of two immigrants exalting one side of his ancestry 32 years on from the other. Hughton - the first black player to represent Ireland, in 1979 - told Sun Sport: "I don't need to speak too much about what playing for Ireland, as well as working with Brian Kerr as his assistant, meant to me. "And when the opportunity came to be associated with Ghana, where my father was from, well, I was very proud. "My dad is not the youngest anymore, and he's an old-school type so you don't get so much from him, but he's very proud too and pleased with what I'm doing, particularly at this stage of my career." With pre-season underway, Hughton will be watching Ghanaian players based in England and further afield with a view to that double-header against Angola in two months' time. He is now completely au fait with the country's pool of talent after that sink-or-swim tie against Nigeria, won on away goals. Hughton said: "Some of the players

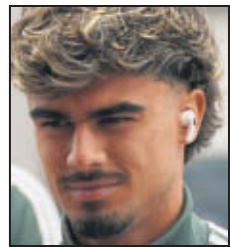
I would have been less familiar with but my experience helped and dressing rooms are more or less the same wherever you go." It is not just players he is seeing, with the role allowing Hughton to call in on relatives in Ghana, both in Accra and Tema, further east from the capital along the country's Atlantic coast. Hughton - whose brother Henry and son Cian also represented Ireland, at underage level - said: "Football put me in a position where I had opportunities and experiences. "As a kid we didn't travel much to Ireland or Ghana. On my mother's side, her brothers and sisters were in England so my grandmother came over regularly to see us. "We'd very working class parents so in those days to travel, it was a big deal and a big expense, especially when you had three kids. "So I got the opportunity to know Ireland, not just from a footballing point of view, but to explore it, Ghana to a lesser degree because it's a lot further away, so that's been a lovely part of it, reconnecting with family." Excitement is building ahead of the World Cup which will see Ghana face Portugal, Uruguay - stirring memories of Luis Suarez's cynical handball in 2010 - and South Korea. As the fourth seeds, Hughton said there is realism among fans about the

challenge they face but also a belief that their team is as well-placed as any to cause an upset. Whatever personal frustration there may have been, Hughton said: "It was a marvellous time and there are some great memories. "Outside of football, meeting the Pope was one of the highlights of my life. I still have the picture at home." That same summer, Hughton ended a 19-year association with Spurs, during which two FA Cups (right) and a Uefa Cup were won. His time with West Ham and Brentford lasted around 18 months each, enough time to help the Hammers win promotion from the Second Division and help the Bees to be crowned Third Division champions. He returned to White Hart Lane as a coach and stayed for a further 14 years in a number of roles including two stints as caretaker manager, before he was sacked, alongside then-boss Martin Jol, in October 2007. Appointed first-team coach at Newcastle United four months later, followed by a couple of spells in interim charge, he was handed the job on a permanent basis in October 2009. He guided the Magpies to the Championship title, led Birmingham City to the play-offs, avoided relegation with Norwich City and won promotion with Brighton. As he had with Newcastle, he consolidated the Seagulls' place in the top flight. His most recent role with Not-

tingham Forest was less successful but, at 63, he is eager for more challenges. Hughton said: "I still see myself as a head coach. This was an opportunity to do something else and it excited me, particularly going to the World Cup. "After that, I don't know, but I am very open. I got my first managerial job when I was 50 whereas some people are a lot younger. "There is no doubt management can wear you down because it's a stressful occupation. The fact that I came in later than maybe most, I feel I have a lot more to offer. I've got a lot of energy." For now, that is being expended on helping out Addo who, as well as his role with Ghana, is assistant coach at one of his former clubs in Germany. Hughton said: "One thing we're very clear on is that he is the head coach. "He is someone I was aware of as a player and he has a good pedigree. "Otto is also a very good coach, he would not be employed by Borussia Dortmund if he was not. He is

responsible for picking the team and the tactics. My role is to be a sounding board, to give whatever advice I can to support him and the rest of the coaching team as best I can. "Because of my experience, I'm confident that I can handle that." Hughton's involvement has been well received in Ghana but he added: "Most people see it as a good technical staff. As well as Otto, there is George Boateng, whom I know well and is working at Aston Villa. "We've a well-established coach, Mas-Ud Didi Dramani, based in Ghana, and the goal-keeping coach, Richard Kingson, played for Ghana. "Football has changed. A lot of what we're doing is over Zoom or Wyscout with the head coach in Germany and me in England but we feel there's a really good dynamic there." The role also allows the grandfather to spend more time with his family, including those two proud parents.

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JOTA... equalised

He's Jota lot more to come

Celtic.....2
Blackburn.....2

By GARETH LAW

ANGE POSTECOGLOU reckons Jota can be an even better player for Celtic this season after he dazzled against Blackburn. The Hoops' £6.4million winger, who re-signed this summer along with centre-back Cameron Carter-Vickers, levelled for 1-1 in yesterday's pre-season clash at Parkhead. After starring while on loan from Benfica last season, boss Postecoglou is sure there is even more to come now he has made his move permanent. The Aussie boss said: "There's no ceiling to his potential. He probably struggled during the week. "All the players are working hard and aren't feeling 100 per cent going into games, and he's one. "Especially attacking players, they rely on feeling fresh and their athleticism and speed. "But Jota was good. I know people said we've re-signed two players but we've signed two better players. That's why we brought them in. "There's no reason why Jota can't go further." Jota equalised Sam Gal-

GHANA FROM HEAVEN

Chris aims for Black Stars success in name of the father



EURO STAR
... Hughton (bottom, third from right) at Euro '88 and (right) with the Championship trophy as Newcastle boss



HUGH HONOUR... former Ireland defender Chris Hughton is now a technical advisor with the Ghanaian national team, the home country of his father William

My dad is an old-school type so you don't get so much from him, but he's very proud

agher's 20th-second opener before free-kicks from David Turnbull and Ben Brereton Diaz saw things finish all square. Postecoglou now hopes to add two more players within the week. He said: "We're definitely going to add a couple of players and would expect to do that in the next seven days. "We've had to be patient and that's much more important than rushing. I'm confident we're close to the end point."

Alan Nixon BOSS OF GOSS

SUNSPORT'S MAN IN THE KNOW FOR RED-HOT TRANSFER NEWS

CRYSTAL PALACE'S 18-year-old Ireland Under-21 left-back Tayo Adaramola is wanted on loan by Coventry chief Mark Robins. And Oxford United boss Karl Robinson is trying to hijack the Eagles' midfield starlet Jesurun Rak Sakyi, 19, despite MK Dons being close to a deal.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST'S move for Lewis O'Brien is being delayed over a bizarre 'extra' cost. The Huddersfield midfielder, 23, has a fixed £10million fee in his deal - but it is more for a promoted club and Forest beat the Terriers in the Championship play-off final.

CENTRE-HALF Tyler Magloire, 23, is wanted by Hartlepool and could move despite being given a new deal by Blackburn before Tony Mowbray left. Swansea are in talks to sign 21-year-old Scottish forward Connor McBride after he left Rovers.

JAMAL BLACKMAN could be on his way to League One with Port Vale seeking a keeper. The former Chelsea prospect, 28, is a free agent after he left Huddersfield Town this summer but could now hook up with Vale.

BIG AL'S Wicked whisper

WAYNE ROONEY took the decision to go to MLS side DC United after being blanked in England. Roo was open to making a return to management if the right job came up after he quit Derby. But when he put his name in for one job he was totally overlooked and opted for a return to Washington where he was a hero as a player.

JACK DE LAD

MANCHESTER UNITED are making a shock move for former England goalkeeper Jack Butland. United have asked Crystal Palace to name their price for the 29-year-old, who is seen as ideal competition for David de Gea. Butland (right) has fallen to third choice at Selhurst Park with the arrival of Sam Johnstone - and is allowed to go if the deal is right. Palace will want a decent fee as they would have to replace him in their squad.

Eagles will Teke offers Kompany car for Davies £40m prize tag on KWP

CRYSTAL PALACE will sell Christian Benteke if they get the right offer. The Eagles need to raise some funds for a new attacker or two. Former Liverpool man Benteke (right), 31, was in and out of the side last term and the big Belgian target man is eager to play first-team football in the run up to this winter's World Cup.

LIVERPOOL'S forgotten man Ben Davies is in the middle of a transfer war - with Vincent Kompany's Burnley now joining the hunt. Defender Davies, 26, has been cleared to leave the Kop with Clarets and SPL giants Rangers both keen. Blackburn and Stoke also want his services.

SOUTHAMPTON want £40million for right-back Kyle Walker-Peters. Everton have an eye on the full-back (left), 25, but are short of the Saints' valuation. St Mary's side had been keen on Welsh defender Neco Williams as a potential replacement but he joined Nottingham Forest from Liverpool instead.