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## SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

### top picks

- A match at **Croke Park** (p192)
- A round of golf in **Druid's Glen** (p189)
- Heineken Cup rugby in **Donnybrook** (p194)
- A night at the dogs in **Shelbourne Park** (p193)
- A massage in **Melt** (p188)

# SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Just as soon as you thought that the alpha and omega of all social activity in this city occurred within an arm's length of licensed premises, you might be shocked to know that Dubliners treat their sport – both watched and played – like religion. For some, it's all about faith through good works like jogging, amateur football and yoga; for most everyone else, observance is enough, especially from the living room armchair or the pub stool.

Sporting facilities are pretty good, but for the most part they're in private hands – there are only a handful of public tennis courts in the whole city, for instance (and they're not that good) – which means that you'll have to pay some kind of fee or membership to participate in most sports. We assume you're only visiting, so there's little point in telling you how to join one of the city's myriad soccer, rugby or GAA teams; instead, you'll have to settle on watching them play.

## HEALTH & FITNESS

Dublin's become far more body-conscious than ever. Gym memberships have soared – although most city-centre gyms are private affairs that require three- to six-month membership commitments. No hotel worth its handful of stars opens its doors these days without having somewhere for guests to stretch a muscle or two, while anywhere that wants to rock five stars has to provide the ultimate in self-care: the spa. We're suckers for the kinds of mysterious treatments administered to a body that just murmurs in delight, but we leave a dangling, cynical question mark over some of these mystical Indian- and Irish-named treatments that are little more than an oily massage to whale music. The gyms and spas listed here are all open to the public. Get healthy and beautiful at the following places:

### BELLAZA CLINIC Map p99

☎ 496 3484; [www.bellazabeauty.com](http://www.bellazabeauty.com); 27 Ranelagh Rd, Ranelagh; treatments €50-600; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Wed & Fri-Sat, to 8pm Thu; 📍 Ranelagh

Cult facialist Sue Machesney uses all her considerable skills to treat, repair, nurture and love all kinds of skins – using facials, vein zapping, laser hair removals and other non-surgical methods that leave you feeling beautiful without the post-op feeling.

### FOUR SEASONS SPA Map p99

☎ 665 4000; [www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com); Four Seasons Hotel; Simonscourt Rd, Ballsbridge; ☎ 9am-9pm Every conceivable treatment, from a basic 55-minute facial to the three-hour Swiss

Bliss, working the body from head to toe with a range of La Prairie products, is available at this top spa in arguably the city's finest hotel. Day packages (€150 to €400) also allow you full use of the gym, swimming pool and fitness facilities.

### MANDALA DAY SPA Map pp66-7

☎ 671 7099; [www.mandala.ie](http://www.mandala.ie); La Stampa, 35 Dawson St; 70min massage €120; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Tue & Sat-Sun, to 9pm Wed-Thu, to 8pm Fri It sells itself as the 'essence of Eastern solace', but even the cringeworthy feng shui nonsense doesn't detract from the fact that this is a terrific little spa where you genuinely can iron out those stress creases and get back in touch with your inner softness (there is such a thing as too much spa treatment).

### MARKIEWICZ LEISURE CENTRE

Map pp78-9  
☎ 672 9121; [www.dublincity.ie](http://www.dublincity.ie); Townsend St; adult/child €5.50/2.80; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Thu, 7am-9pm Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun This excellent fitness centre has a swimming pool, a workout room (with plenty of gym machines) and a sauna. You can swim for as long as you please, but children are only allowed at off-peak times (10am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday).

### MELT Map p85

☎ 679 8786; [www.meltonline.com](http://www.meltonline.com); 2 Temple Lane; massage per 30min €45, 1hr €50-55; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat A full range of massage techniques – from Swedish to shiatsu and many more in

between – are doled out by expert practitioners at Melt, aka the Temple Bar Healing Centre. Also available are a host of other left-of-centre healing techniques, including acupuncture, Reiki and polarity therapy. It's all very alternative, but the touchy-feely vibe never obscures the fact that these folks really know what they're doing.

### WELLS SPA

☎ 0402 36444; [www.brooklodge.com](http://www.brooklodge.com); Brook Lodge, Macreddin, Co Wicklow; whole-day packages €230-270; 📍 Bus Eireann 133 from city centre to Rathdrum OK, so it's not technically in Dublin, but this extraordinary spa in a luxurious country house is the favourite chill-out spot for Dublin's high-flyers. Mud and flotation chambers, Finnish and aroma baths, Hammam massages and a full range of Decleor & Carita treatments make this one of the top spas in the country. Whole-day treatments include a light lunch and full use of all the pool and gym facilities. Your credit card will never have nestled in softer hands. It is 3km west of Rathdrum in the village of Macreddin.

## ACTIVITIES

It's tough to join in a sport if you're breezing through the city; there are virtually no opportunities to join in besides a round of golf, which is always popular.

## GOLF

Pádraig Harrington's unlikely play-off win of the 2007 Open Championship at Carnoustie is the most momentous event in recent Irish golfing history, eclipsing even the successful hosting of the 2006 Ryder Cup at Kildare's famous K Club. Indeed, although Ireland has always been renowned for its outstanding courses – mostly seaside links – in recent years a slew of new developments has seen the arrival of the modern, American-style resort course, most of them an easy drive from Dublin. The following are the best courses:

### CARTON HOUSE Map p213

☎ 505 2000; [www.cartonhouse.com](http://www.cartonhouse.com); Maynooth, Co Kildare; green fees Mon-Wed €115, Thu-Sun €135) Two outstanding courses designed by Colm Montgomerie and Mark O'Meara respectively.

## top picks

### DUBLIN SPORTING MOMENTS

- Dubliner Pádraig Harrington winning the Open Championship in 2007 – the first Irish golfer to win a major since Fred Daly in 1947.
- Dublin beating Kerry in the 1976 All-Ireland Final, the only victory in four finals meetings that decade against the Kingdom.
- Ireland beating England 1-0 in 1988 during the European Championship finals in Stuttgart, the first – and only – time the Irish soccer team has ever beaten England competitively.
- The Irish rugby team beating England by a record margin 43-13 on 24 February 2007 at Croke Park: history and victory wrapped up in one delicious moment.
- England losing at anything, preferably sports that they think they're good at (hey, Dubliners love a little *Schadenfreude*).

### DRUID'S GLEN Map p213

☎ 287 3600; [www.druidsglen.ie](http://www.druidsglen.ie); Newtownmountkennedy, Co Wicklow; green fee €180 One of the older breed of championship courses, this is a spectacular place to play with some stunningly beautiful holes.

### HERITAGE Map p213

☎ 0578-645 500; [www.theheritage.com](http://www.theheritage.com); Killenard, Co Laois; green fee Mon-Wed €115, Thu-Sun €135 This new Seve Ballesteros–designed resort has an outstanding course, a five-star hotel and a top spa in and around the American-style club house.

### K CLUB Map p213

☎ 601 7297; [www.kclub.com](http://www.kclub.com); Kildare Hotel & Golf Club, Straffan, Co Kildare; green fee Jan-Apr & Oct-Dec €160, May-Sep €370 Host of the Ryder Cup in 2006 and the annual European Open in late July/early August, the two courses here are among the best in the country.

## SPECTATOR SPORT

Sport has a special place in the Irish psyche, probably because it's one of the few occasions when an overwhelming expression of emotion won't cause those around you to wince

or shuffle in discomfort. Sit in a pub while a match is on and watch the punters foam at the mouth as they yell pleasantries at the players on the screen, such as ‘they should pay me for watching you!’

What is absolutely true, however, is that sport – for the few who play and the majority who are happy to watch it on TV or from the sidelines – is a major bonding activity in Dublin, and it’s by no means an exclusively male domain. Ask any adult in Dublin for their top five sporting moments and they could probably reel them off as quickly as they could remember their five closest friends.

## FOOTBALL

Dublin is football mad, although local fans – and the national broadcaster – are much more enthusiastic about the likes of Manchester United, Liverpool and Glasgow Celtic than the struggling pros and part-timers that make up the [Eircom League of Ireland](http://www.leagueofireland.com) (www.leagueofireland.com). It’s just too difficult for domestic teams to compete with the multimillionaire glitz and glamour of the English Premiership, which has always drawn off the cream of Irish talent. The current crop of Dubliners playing in England include Damien Duff (Newcastle

United), Robbie Keane (Tottenham Hotspur, where he is captain) and Paul McShane (Sunderland).

Nevertheless, if you want to feel the excitement of actually attending a game rather than just watching it on TV, Dublin is currently home to five teams in the League of Ireland Premier division (see the boxed text, [below](#)). The season runs from April to November; tickets are easily available at all grounds.

The national side, made up of Irish players playing nowhere near the League of Ireland, has had some notable successes, especially in the late 1980s and 1990s, but things haven’t gone so well since their last appearance in a major tournament, the World Cup of 2002. They are – in the words of Irish soccer’s governing body, the [Football Association of Ireland](http://www.fai.ie) (FAI; ☎ 676 6864; www.fai.ie) – in a ‘period of rebuilding’, but most fans are pissed off with the whole organisation and their perceived mismanagement of the national team. In 2006 they fired manager Brian Kerr and promised a ‘world class replacement’. In came ex-player Steve ‘Stan’ Staunton, whose management experience didn’t extend much further than picking up the training cones in his role as assistant at lowly English side Walsall. Stan oversaw a hapless qualifying campaign for

## LOCAL FOOTBALL TEAMS

Local die-hards will insist that ‘real’ football is played on bumpy pitches by ‘honest’ semi-pros who aren’t wandering about the pitch thinking about their image rights. You can find out for yourself between April and November by going to see one of the Dublin clubs in action.

**Bohemians FC** (Map pp62–3; ☎ 868 9923; www.bohemians.ie; Dalymount Park, Phibsboro; adult/child €15/5; 🚌 10, 19 or 19A) Known as the Gypsies, this club is the north side’s pride and joy, and one of only two totally professional teams playing in the league.

**St Patrick’s Athletic** (Map pp62–3; ☎ 454 6332; www.stpatsfc.com; Richmond Park, Inchicore, Dublin 8; adult/child from €15/10; 🚌 Drimnagh or Goldenbridge, 🚗 19, 51, 51B, 68 or 69) Four league titles in the 1990s, and one since the turn of the century... the Saints are an accomplished club whose ground is known as the Stadium of Lights, in tribute to the infinitely more impressive ground once played on by Benfica.

**Shamrock Rovers FC** (☎ 709 3620; www.shamrockrovers.ie; 35 Boyne House, Greenmount Office Park, Harold’s Cross, Dublin 6; adult/child €15/10; 🚌 3, 11, 11A, 13, 16 or 16A) The Hoops’ tale is a cautionary one: once the dominant club in Irish soccer, the team hasn’t won the league in years and it doesn’t even have a permanent home ground. It’s playing at Tolka Park pending the long-awaited construction of their own ground in Tallaght, which remains caught up in planning row limbo.

**Shelbourne FC** (Map p118; ☎ 837 5536; www.shelbournefc.ie; Tolka Park, Richmond Rd, Drumcondra; adult/child €15/5; 🚌 3, 11, 11A, 13, 16 or 16A) Premier League champions in 2006, Shels was ignominiously booted out of the top division straight afterwards for financial irregularities, lost all its good players and spent all of 2007 struggling in Division 1 – which is really the second division.

**UCD** (off Map p99; ☎ 716 2142; www.ucdsoccer.com; Belfield, Clonskeagh; adult/child from €10/5; 🚌 10, 10A) The Students have been yo-yoing up and down the league but in 2007 found themselves respectively mid-table in the Premier Division. They play in the lovely Belfield stadium, part of the University College Dublin campus.

## THE FAST & THE FURIOUS

Gaelic games are fast, furious and not for the faint-hearted. Challenges are fierce, and contact between players is extremely aggressive. Both games are played by two teams of 15 players whose aim is to get the ball through what resembles a rugby goal: two long vertical posts joined by a horizontal bar, below which is a soccer-style goal, protected by a goalkeeper. Goals (below the crossbar) are worth three points, whereas a ball placed over the bar between the posts is worth one point. Scores are shown thus: 1-12, meaning one goal and 12 points, giving a total of 15 points.

Gaelic football is played with a round, soccer-size ball, and players are allowed to kick it or hand-pass it, like Australian Rules football. Hurling, which is considered by far the more beautiful game, is played with a flat ashen stick or bat known as a hurley or *camán*. The small leather ball, called a *sliothar*, is hit or carried on the hurley; hand-passing is also allowed. Both games are played over 70 action-filled minutes.

Both sports are county-based games. The dream of every club player is to represent his county, with the hope of perhaps playing in an All-Ireland final, the climax of a knockout championship that is played first at a provincial and then interprovincial level.

And if you thought that only men would be so bold as to get involved, you’ll be surprised to know that there’s also an equally tough women’s version of hurling called camogie, which is now being promoted as ‘chicks with sticks’ in an attempt to rejuvenate the sport. Women’s football is growing all the time, with the Dublin senior team one of the country’s best, along with Waterford, Mayo and Monaghan.

Euro 2008, which cost Ireland qualification and, eventually, Stan’s own job. The winter of 2007 looked bleak indeed for the Irish national team.

Still, Ireland’s misfortunes don’t stop the fans from filling the stadium to see them play. Until the redevelopment of their long-time home at Lansdowne Road (which should be ready by 2011), the Irish will play their home games in the magnificent [Croke Park stadium](#) (p117). Tickets range from €25 to €50, but fan interest and corporate buyouts make getting a ticket for a really competitive match pretty tough without having to deal with a tout.

## GAELIC FOOTBALL & HURLING

Gaelic games are at the core of Irishness; they are enmeshed in the fabric of Irish life and hold a unique place in the heart of its culture. Their resurgence towards the end of the 19th century was entwined with the whole Gaelic revival and the march towards Irish independence. The beating heart of Gaelic sports is the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), set up in 1884 ‘for the preservation and cultivation of National pastimes’. The GAA is still responsible for fostering these amateur games and it warms our hearts to see that after all this time – and amid the onslaught of globalisation and the general commercialisation of sport – they are still far and away the most popular sports in Ireland.

They are simultaneously the most divisive and unifying activity in Irish culture. Although the GAA club is at the heart and soul of virtually every parish in the country, in Dublin the organisation holds its greatest

sway in the northern half of the city and the traditionally working- and lower-middle-class enclaves on the south side.

Here football – commonly referred to as ‘gaah’ (but only by Dubs) – is king, and hurling is a game for country folk and crazy people with a death wish. This is probably because, while Dubs are very good at football, they’re light years behind the very best practitioners of what they disparagingly call ‘stick-fighting’. We’ve outlined the basic rules in a boxed text ([above](#)).

Support for the Dubs verges on the fanatical, but it’s a support that grows from the ground up, beginning with the local parish club that virtually everyone – man, woman and child – in the community can be a member of. And, because the GAA is a volunteer-based amateur organisation, local communities come together to raise money for the club, through cake sales, raffles, bingo nights and other fund-raising efforts that further strengthen the ties that bind.

Community bonding aside, club matches are intensely competitive and provoke fierce local rivalries, especially among the major teams in north Dublin: Na Fianna from the Finglas/Glasnevin area, St Brigid’s from Castleknock and St Vincent’s from Raheny. Throw in a little southside rivalry with Kilmacud Crokes and the support can get pretty vocal. But when the best players from the club teams are selected to put on the blessed blue jersey, local rivalries are cast aside and replaced by intercounty ones as supporters unite behind their county. As fervent as this rivalry is, and as polarised as the support may

be, there's rarely a cross word between opposing fans who are ultimately united in their love of the game and shared heritage; there's nothing like it anywhere else in the world, and we love it.

They might be good at football, but the Blues haven't held Sam in their mitts since 1995 – 'Sam' being the Sam Maguire Cup, awarded to the winner of the All-Ireland Football Championship, contested at a county level from April onwards to the final in Croke Park on the third Sunday of September. They have won a few Leinster finals in the last few years, but they can't seem to cross that final hurdle and add to their tally of 22 All-Ireland wins, an impressive haul that is second only to their great nemesis Kerry, who added yet another win in 2007 to make it a face-rubbing 35.

The All-Ireland's poorer cousin is the National Football League (and National Hurling League), which runs from February until mid-April. All of the county teams fight it out for the title of their respective divisions in a tournament that is generally seen as the warm-up for the All-Ireland Championship, which begins a couple of weeks after the league has wrapped up its affairs.

Dublin plays all of its championship matches at the newly remodelled [Croke Park](#)

(p117), Ireland's largest stadium and the venue for both semifinals and the final, irrespective of whether the Dubs are involved. League matches, however, are played at the far less impressive [Parnell Park](#) (off Map pp62–3; Clantarky Rd, Donnycarney; adult/child €10/7; ☎ 20A, 20B, 27, 27A, 42, 42B, 43 or 103 from Lower Abbey St or Beresford Pl).

While tickets for the NFL and NHL are easy to come by (you can just buy one at the grounds), they're tougher to get for the championship games, particularly past the quarter-final stages. Dublin's hurling team usually gets pounded long before then, but the football team is generally expected to reach the quarterfinals at least. Ticket prices range from €28 in the stand and €16 in the terrace for the early rounds, €37 and €17 respectively for the quarterfinals, €42 and €28 for the semis, and €65 and €35 for the final – although good luck hunting down a ticket for the big game. Kids are entitled to a €6 juvenile ticket, but then must be seated in the stand; if you want to take your kid into the terrace, you'll have to pay full price. The stand is more comfortable and usually has better views, but if the Dubs are playing and you want to get right into the partisan thick of things, go for the Hill 16 terrace.

The website for all Dublin-related info is [www.hill16.ie](#).

## WHEN HISTORY REALLY MATTERS

At 5.31pm on 24 February 2007, history was made. It happened at Croke Park, when the band struck the first notes of 'God Save the Queen'. The English rugby team stood proudly to attention, and the 82,000 in the crowd applauded respectfully before settling down to a long-anticipated Six Nations match between Ireland and 'the old enemy'.

A quarter century ago, the above paragraph would have seemed the stuff of heretical fantasy, a perverse dream that would – could – never, ever come true. Before that day, the last official representatives of Britain to set foot inside Croke Park did so on 1 November 1920, when soldiers opened fire on the crowd in retaliation for the earlier killing of 14 British agents. Fourteen people, including a player and two young boys, died. In the intervening 76 years, the Republic of Ireland came into being and the Gaelic Athletic Association admirably went about the task of establishing itself as the premier sporting and cultural association in the country, with a wide-ranging influence that included a ban on all 'foreign' (read: English) games in its holiest cathedral, Croke Park.

The Irish did play football and rugby – quite successfully in recent decades – but they did so away from GAA-controlled pitches, with internationals played at Lansdowne Road, owned by the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU). But Lansdowne Road began a long-overdue reconstruction in 2007, leaving the rugby crowd and the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) with a major dilemma: with no alternative stadium in Ireland to stage internationals, they were confronting the possibility of staging home games in... gasp... Britain!

The GAA had refused to even talk about it for a couple of years, but in April 2005 they voted – by the slenderest of margins – to allow temporary use of Croke Park to their rival associations. And so 24 February 2007 came, and with it history of the most momentous kind. Eighty minutes later, another bit of history: Ireland had won, 43-13, by the biggest margin ever.

A neat and fitting end to a powerful bit of history. But in the interests of (often) boring accuracy, it must be mentioned that the English were not the first team to play an English game at Croke Park: two weeks earlier, the French earned that particular honour with a hard-fought win over a spirited Irish side who were over-awed by the sense of occasion. But it was the English that really mattered. As always.

## HORSE & GREYHOUND RACING

Dubliners love the gee-gees, but most of all, they love betting on them. There are several picturesque racecourses within easy driving distance of the city centre and there are good quality meetings throughout the year.

The flat racing season runs from March to November, while the National Hunt season – when horses jump over things – is October to April. There are also some events in summer.

Traditionally the poor-man's punt, greyhound racing (the dogs), has been smartened up in recent years and partly turned into a corporate outing. It offers a cheaper, more accessible and more local alternative to horse racing. The action all happens at the following venues:

### CURRAGH Map p213

☎ 045-441 205; [www.curragh.ie](#); County Kildare; admission €16-55; 🚗 special from Busáras  
The home of Irish racing, 35km west of Dublin, hosts five classic flat races between May and September: the 1000 Guineas, 2000 Guineas, Oaks, St Leger and Irish Derby.

### FAIRYHOUSE Map p213

☎ 825 6167; [www.fairyhouseracecourse.com](#); Ratoath, County Meath; admission €14-22; 🚗 special from Busáras

The National Hunt season has its yearly climax with the Grand National, held here on Easter Monday. The course is 25km north of Dublin.

### HAROLD'S CROSS PARK Map pp62–3

☎ 497 1081; 151 Harold's Cross Rd; admission €8; 🕒 from 8pm Mon, Tue & Fri; 🚗 16

This greyhound track is close to the city centre and offers a great night out for a fraction of what it would cost to go to the horses.

### LEOPARDSTOWN Map p213

☎ 289 3607; [www.leopardstown.com](#); Foxrock; admission €12-55; 🚗 special from Eden Quay  
Specialising in both flat and steeplechase races, Leopardstown's big event is the prestigious Hennessey Gold Cup in February.

### PUNCESTOWN Map p213

☎ 045-897 704; [www.punchestown.com](#); Naas, Co Kildare; admission from €15

Although it specialises mostly in flat racing, Puncchestown is home to the extremely

popular Steeplechase Festival in April. The course is 40km southwest of the city.

### SHELBOURNE PARK Map p99

☎ 668 3502; [www.shelbournepark.com](#); South Lotts Rd; admission €8; 🕒 7-10.30pm Wed, Thu & Sat; 🚗 3, 7, 7A, 8, 45 or 84

All the comforts, including a restaurant in the covered stand overlooking the track, make going to the dogs one of the best nights out in town. Table service – including betting – means that you don't even have to get out of your seat. [Shelbourne Football Club](#) (see the boxed text, p190) doesn't play here; its home is Tolka Park. Don't worry, even some Dubs get confused.

## RUGBY

Have a look at any of Ross O'Carroll-Kelly's hilarious tales of life in Dublin and you'll understand how important rugby is in certain social circles, especially the affluent ones of SoCoDu (that's South County Dublin to you and me). Attendance at one of the dozen or so rugby-playing schools in Dublin is advantage enough, but being a rugby star, especially at Blackrock College, the *primus inter pares* of rugger schools, is a virtual guarantee of status, recognition and a bloody good career.

Rugby is but a sporting extension of a privileged caste, but it helps to be passionate about the game, especially the fortunes of Leinster, the provincial side. It's currently captained by the Mr Dreamy of most young rugger bugger huggers (as the girls who like rugby and rugby players are so affectionately known), Brian O'Driscoll (who was born and raised on the north side). Drico also happens to be the main man on the Irish national team, which pretty much ensures that a bit of Dublin 4 will one day bear his name.

The association with privilege has pretty much always been there with rugby, until the game decided to go global, kick its branding into a whole new gear and Dublin began witnessing some pretty successful local teams at both inter-provincial and international level. Irish rugby's governing body, the [Irish Rugby Football Union](#) (IRFU; Map p99; ☎ 660 0779; [www.irishrugby.ie](#); 62 Lansdowne Rd), has done a brilliant job of selling rugby outside its traditional domain, so much so that the game has finally generated a genuinely national interest.

The Six Nations championship sees Ireland pitted against Scotland, Wales, France, Italy

and the old enemy, England, in an annual league that in recent years has seen Ireland beat everyone except the French. Ireland's three home matches – played between February and April – are currently being staged at Croke Park (p117) while their own Lansdowne Road stadium is being rebuilt – the work should be done by 2011. Tickets for internationals are like gold dust – they're generally divided between corporate buyers and the network of small clubs throughout the country, of which you need to be a member if you want a ticket. You can try getting them through the IRFU (which also has a limited online purchasing service), but chances are you'll draw a blank.

Leinster has had similar fortunes to the national side – good, but not quite good enough. They have performed steadily in the European

Cup, the premier provincial tournament that sees sides from the Six Nations countries play each other from December to May. The 2006 season culminated in a final that their great rivals Munster won. Leinster has done better in the lesser Celtic League (played against teams from Scotland and Wales), which runs from September to January, but mostly because everyone is gearing up for the European Cup. If you want to see them play, you can do so at the [Donnybrook Rugby Ground](#) (Map p99; ☎ 269 3224; www.leinsterrugby.ie; Donnybrook Rd; adult/child from €20/10). Tickets for both competitions are available at [Elvery's](#) (Map pp66–7; ☎ 679 4142; Suffolk St), another [outlet](#) (Map pp66–7; ☎ 679 1141; Dawson St); and at the [Spar](#) (Map p99; ☎ 269 3261; 54–56 Donnybrook Rd) opposite the rugby ground; or online from the IRFU or Leinster rugby.

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