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RISE IN ADULTS STUDYING IRISH
WEEKEND



GAME ON

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RUGBY CONOR MURRAY: THE SCHMIDT FACTOR
GOLF McILROY ON THE MOVE IN PORTRUSH
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Gold run Thompson wins U-23 10,000m in Norway

Anika Thompson (pictured) and Nicola Tuthill made it an evening to remember for Irish athletes at the European Under-23 Championships in Bergen, Norway, winning gold and silver in the 10,000m and hammer respectively.

Report: Sports Weekend
Photograph: Alex Livesey/Getty Images



Books A feast of food memoirs



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McGuinness leads race for Áras, poll shows

Voters back Donohoe's ministerial output with 29% favouring him as next FG leader

PAT LEAHY
Political Editor

Fine Gael's Mairead McGuinness leads the field in a list of potential presidential election candidates, according to the latest Irish Times/Ipsos B&A opinion poll, though the results show nobody has yet caught the public imagination.

Asked who they would probably vote for in the presidential election, 14 per cent of respondents named Ms McGuinness, who secured her party's nomi-

nation this week after emerging as the only potential candidate.

The two most popular choices in the poll were "none of the names so far appeal to me" on 18 per cent, and "not sure" on 20 per cent.

Ms McGuinness is followed by Independent TD Catherine Connolly, who announced her campaign this week, on 9 per cent, and Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald on 8 per cent.

Former taoiseach Bertie Ahern is on 5 per cent, while Taoi-

seach Micheál Martin was nominated by 4 per cent of respondents. Fianna Fáil is yet to put forward a candidate.

Other potential candidates – including Conor McGregor, Cynthia Ní Mhurchú, Éamon Ó Cuív, Fintan O'Toole, Frances Black, Gerry Adams, Mary Hanafin, Michelle O'Neill, Mike Ryan and Peter Casey – registered at between 1 and 3 per cent.

Voters are almost evenly divided on whether they would like the next president to be a current or former politician, or someone from a non-political background. Among those who expressed a view, 43 per cent said they would prefer a politician, with 41 per cent saying they would like a non-politician.

Six months after the Government was formed, voters were also asked about how they thought Ministers were performing.

The top performer was Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe, with almost half of voters (48 per cent) saying he was doing a "good job". Just over a quarter (26 per cent) said he was doing a poor job, with a similar number stating they were "not sure".

'Net positive'

Mr Donohoe's numbers give him a "net positive" rating of 22 points, putting him far ahead of most of his colleagues.

The poll also asked voters their choices for the next leaders of Fianna Fáil, Fine

Gael and Sinn Féin.

Mr Donohoe was the clear favourite to succeed Simon Harris as Fine Gael leader, with 29 per cent of all voters favouring him, ahead of 12 per cent for Helen McEntee and 8 per cent for Jennifer Carroll MacNeill. Among Fine Gael voters, 50 per cent nominate Mr Donohoe as their choice.

Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan is the favourite choice of all voters to be the next leader of Fianna Fáil (16 per cent), narrowly ahead of Jack Chambers and Darragh O'Brien. Almost a third (32 per cent) of Fianna Fáil voters prefer Mr O'Callaghan.

Pearse Doherty is regarded as the clear front-runner to be the next Sinn Féin leader, with

the backing of 28 per cent of all voters, and 42 per cent among Sinn Féin voters.

The worst performer in the poll was Minister for Housing James Browne, whom 59 per cent of voters said was doing a poor job and has a net negative rating of 44 points.

→ Irish presidency poll reveals just how tuned out of the process people are: page 4



Trump sues Wall Street Journal owners over Epstein letter

KAYE WIGGINS and ANNA NICOLAOU in New York and STEFANIA PALMA and LAUREN FEDOR in Washington

Donald Trump has filed a lawsuit against Rupert Murdoch and News Corp after the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) published a report of a letter that the US president allegedly wrote for the late paedophile Jeffrey Epstein.

Court records show Mr Trump filed a case in Florida federal court yesterday against the WSJ's parent companies News Corp and Dow Jones, two WSJ reporters and the newspaper's owner, Mr Murdoch.

Details of the complaint are not yet public, but court records show the libel suit was filed in the Southern District of Florida.

The lawsuit comes after the WSJ reported that to mark Epstein's 50th birthday in 2003, Mr Trump wrote a letter that was compiled in an album and featured a lewd drawing. In the letter, Mr Trump wished Epstein a happy birthday and wrote "may every day be another wonderful secret", according to the report.

Mr Trump spent several days lobbying Mr Murdoch, Wall Street Journal editor Emma Tucker and News Corp chief ex-

ecutive Robert Thomson to stop the paper from publishing the story.

After the Journal published its story on Thursday evening, Mr Trump claimed it was "false, malicious, and defamatory".

He lashed out at Mr Murdoch in a series of social media posts, threatening to "sue his ass off, and that of his third rate newspaper".

Spokespeople for Mr Murdoch, News Corp and Dow Jones did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The White House declined to comment.

The legal action comes as the Trump administration has

sought to contain fallout from a memo by the Department of Justice and FBI that earlier this month said there was no Epstein "client list" and no "credible evidence" that he had "blackmailed prominent individuals".

This marked a reversal from Mr Trump's campaign pledge to release files on Epstein's death by suicide in 2019. US attorney-general Pam Bondi said in February that a "client list" was "sitting" on her desk for review.

Acting at Mr Trump's direction, the justice department filed a motion in a Manhattan federal court yesterday, asking a judge to unseal grand jury testimony transcripts from the fed-

eral sex-trafficking investigation into Epstein.

Releasing the transcripts, however, will not satisfy some supporters of the president who want to see him release all of the files from the federal investigation into Epstein, including a rumoured list of powerful men alleged to have had sex with minors Epstein trafficked, and other documents. – Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2025/Additional reporting: Guardian

→ Epstein files are a new crisis for Trump as supporters blowtorch their Maga hats: page 13

Weather

Rain in the southwest will progress across Munster and south Leinster. Highs of 17-21 degrees in fresh breezes.

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Home News

Spending: The Taoiseach and Tánaiste are to hold talks today on how €20 billion in funding for key projects will be spent over the coming years. Page 2

Housing: Work on four blocks of apartments in Kilcock, Co Kildare, has been stalled by order of the HSA. Page 6

World News



Germany: Chancellor Friedrich Merz has insisted his government's support for Israel is conditional. Page 12

Business Today

Motoring: Research from Outsurance suggests Irish motorists spend an average of €10,000 a year to keep their petrol or diesel car running. Page 18

Primark: The company, which operates Penneys in Ireland, made an average pretax profit of €2m per day. Page 19

Sports Weekend

Cycling: Ireland's Ben Healy remains 11th overall as Tadej Pogacar extended his race lead by winning yesterday's time trial stage in the Tour de France

Racing: Aidan O'Brien's Minnie Hauk is heavily favoured to take today's Juddmonte Irish Oaks

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