



An Interview with Gordon D'Arcy given to Wexford Scene magazine during Leinster's recent visit to Wexford Wanderers

When did you first realise you wanted to play professional rugby?

"I think it was when Mike Ruddock rang me and asked me to join Leinster on a pre-season camp, it kinda hit me then I could play professionally but the standard I train and play at now is so far ahead of my wildest dreams from back then."

Tell our readers, what was going through your head the first time you walked out to play for Ireland?

"I was very very young playing for Ireland for the first time and while it was a huge day, great fun and achievement. I think my first start for Ireland was when I truly began to realise the enormity of what I was doing. I was one of a lucky few to wear a green jersey, but I was also representing my family and friends, my county and province. We carried the hopes, dreams and expectations of a nation with us and it helped me appreciate what I have."

You were on the Ireland team for the 2009 Six Nations final against Wales. When Wales got that free kick in the last seconds what was going through your mind?

"In a match like that not a huge amount goes through your head, your are so focused on what is happening in the moments that it is really the reaction when it didn't go over is more important. The overwhelming joy and not knowing what to do with it... running then jumping.. sitting then laughing... an addictive feeling."

How does it feel to be back training in Wexford, being home?

"...It was a huge thrill to be preparing for the new season in my home club of Wexford Wanderers, a club who have contributed so much to the local community and who gave me my first introduction to the sport...I know from speaking to the boys how impressed they were by the support that the team received as well as the facilities in both the club and in Whites Hotel. I am extremely proud of my Wexford roots and to look around Wanderers after the final training session with everyone there to support us was fantastic, this is their team as well!"

Have you any advice to the many young rugby players out there who might want to be professional and dream of playing for Ireland?

"...Practice makes perfect. In reality only a very small number of players will ever receive professional contracts so you need a lot of factors to go your way. If you're starting off in the game I would say that you should enjoy playing. It is an incredible honour to represent Leinster and Ireland but all players need a bit of luck, like in anything in life. If you stay focused, work hard and approach training and playing in a strong frame of mind then you will get a lot out of playing the sport. The friends and the bonds you make even at an early age, in victory and defeat, will stay with you right through your life."

Regards

Peter Breen