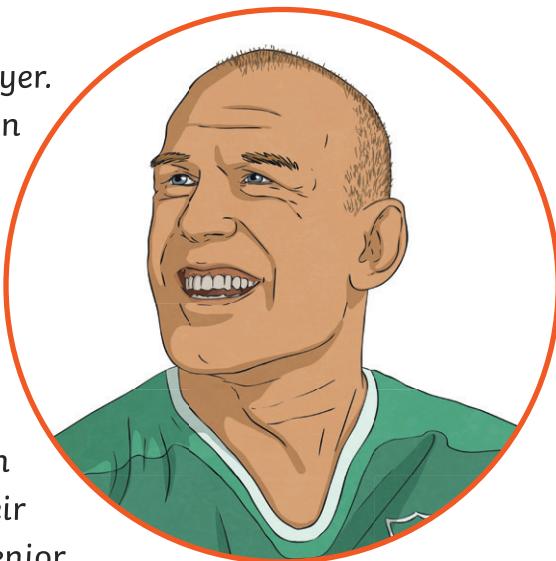


Paul O'Connell

Early Years

Paul O'Connell is a retired Irish rugby player. O'Connell was born in County Limerick on the 20th October 1979. O'Connell was excellent at swimming when he was young, spending up to fifteen hours a week training in the pool. He only began playing rugby at the age of 16. He played for his school, Ardscoil Rís, in the Munster Schools Rugby Senior Cup. Many other Irish rugby players have also played for their schools in the Munster Schools Rugby Senior Cup, including Ronan O'Gara and Simon Zebo.



Paul O'Connell completed 3 years of a computer engineering degree at the University of Limerick. He did not complete this course, instead deciding to focus on his rugby career.



Munster

Paul O'Connell signed his first professional contract with Munster Rugby. O'Connell is six foot six inches tall. As one of the tallest players on the rugby pitch, O'Connell played as a lock. Locks are lifted into the air by teammates to catch line-out throws.

Paul O'Connell played his first match for Munster on the 17th August 2001. He quickly became a key member of the squad and helped Munster to win the European Rugby Champions Cup in 2006. He became the captain of Munster in 2007, succeeding Munster legend Anthony Foley. O'Connell led Munster to their second European Rugby Champions Cup win in 2008. They defeated Toulouse in the final. He also captained Munster against Leinster in their 2011 Celtic League win.

Ireland

Paul O'Connell played his first game for Ireland against Wales in the 2002 Six Nations tournament. He scored a great try; however, he has no memory of scoring it. Earlier in the game, O'Connell received an elbow to the head which left him with a concussion. O'Connell was substituted before half-time after a check-up with the team doctor.



Paul O'Connell scored the last ever try at the Old Lansdowne Road Stadium before it was demolished. The stadium was rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium.

Paul O'Connell led Ireland to a Gram Slam win in the 2009 Six Nations Championship. This was Ireland's first Grand Slam win in 2009. The Grand Slam is when one team wins every one of their matches in the Six Nations. Paul O'Connell was named as the captain of Ireland at the beginning of the 2015 Six Nations. Ireland went on to win the tournament, and Paul O'Connell won the Player of the Championship award. He was also voted as the Irish Rugby Union Players Association (IRUPA) Player of the Year for 2015.

Injury

Paul O'Connell announced that he would retire from international rugby after the 2015 Rugby World Cup. He would also leave Munster and join Toulon, a French rugby team. Paul O'Connell played a key role in Ireland's first three matches of the Word Cup; however, he injured his hamstring in Ireland's fourth game against France. He had to have surgery, which meant he was unable to play in the rest of the World Cup. Following advice from doctors, Paul O'Connell announced his retirement from rugby on the 9th of February 2016. Paul O'Connell made 218 appearances for Munster. He also finished his career as Ireland's third most-capped player, playing 108 international games for his country.

Paul O'Connell's autobiography is called *The Battle*. This book was named as the Irish Sports Book of the Year 2016.

Awards

Paul O'Connell had a very successful career, winning many trophies and awards on his way to becoming a rugby legend. O'Connell won the European Rugby Champions Cup on two occasions. He also won the Pro14 trophy three times. O'Connell also won the Six Nations Championship with Ireland in 2009, 2014 and 2015.

Paul O'Connell married his wife, Emily O'Connell, in July 2013. They have three children, Paddy, Lola and Felix.

Coaching and Media Career

Paul O'Connell joined Munster Rugby's Academy in an advisory role in July 2016. O'Connell became assistant coach with the Ireland Under-20s in 2017. He is currently a coach with Stade Français. O'Connell has also enjoyed success in the media. He joined BBC Sport as a pundit and commentator before the 2017 Six Nations Tournament.

Questions

1. When was Paul O'Connell born?

2. What sport was Paul O'Connell involved in before rugby?

3. How tall is Paul O'Connell? What position did Paul O'Connell play?

4. What is a Grand Slam in the Six Nations Championship?

5. What stadium was demolished and rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium?

6. Tick true or false for the following statement.

Paul O'Connell won the Six Nations Championship three times with Ireland.

true

false

7. How do you think Paul O'Connell felt after injuring his hamstring in the 2015 World Cup?

8. What did you find most interesting about Paul O'Connell?

Answers

1. When was Paul O'Connell born?

Paul O'Connell was born on 20th October 1979.

2. What sport was Paul O'Connell involved in before rugby?

Paul O'Connell was involved in swimming before he began playing rugby.

3. How tall is Paul O'Connell? What position did Paul O'Connell play?

Paul O'Connell is six foot six inches tall. Paul O'Connell was a lock.

4. What is a Grand Slam in the Six Nations Championship?

The Grand Slam is when one team wins every one of their matches in the Six Nations Championship.

5. What stadium was demolished and rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium?

Lansdowne Road Stadium was demolished and rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium.

6. Tick true or false for the following statement.

Paul O'Connell won the Six Nations Championship three times with Ireland.

true

false

7. How do you think Paul O'Connell felt after injuring his hamstring in the 2015 World Cup?

Answers may vary.

8. What did you find most interesting about Paul O'Connell?

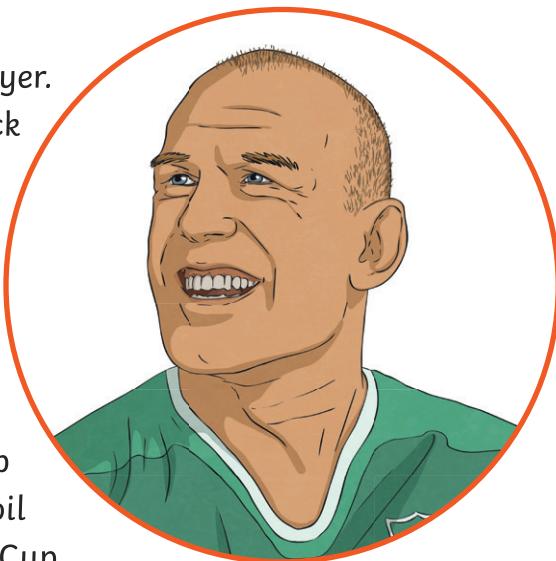
Answers may vary.

Paul O'Connell

Early Years

Paul O'Connell is a former Irish rugby player. O'Connell was born in County Limerick on the 20th October 1979. Surprisingly, O'Connell was an excellent swimmer, spending up to fifteen hours a week training in the pool. He only began playing rugby at the age of 16, but his years of swimming provided him with the work ethic to become one of rugby's top players. He represented his school, Ardscoil Ris, in the Munster Schools Rugby Senior Cup.

Several other Irish professional rugby players have also played for their schools in the Munster Schools Rugby Senior Cup, including Ronan O'Gara and Simon Zebo.



Paul O'Connell completed 3 years of a computer engineering degree at the University of Limerick. He did not complete this course, instead deciding to concentrate on his rugby career.



Munster

Paul O'Connell signed his first professional contract with Munster Rugby. O'Connell stands at a massive six foot six inches tall. As one of the tallest players on the rugby pitch, O'Connell was a natural lock. They are the main targets for lineout throws. They are usually lifted into the air by other teammates to try and catch the ball. They also form the second row of a scrum.

Paul O'Connell made his debut on the 17th August 2001 in a clash against Edinburgh. He quickly became a key member of the squad. He played an important part in Munster's European Rugby Champions Cup success in 2006, defeating Biarritz Olympique in the final. O'Connell's consistent performances and natural leadership meant that he was named as Munster captain in 2007, succeeding Munster legend Anthony Foley. O'Connell led Munster to their second

European Rugby Champions Cup win in 2008. He also captained the side in their 2011 Celtic League victory over fierce rivals, Leinster.

Ireland

Paul O'Connell made his international debut against Wales in the 2002 Six Nations tournament. He scored a fantastic try following an Irish lineout. Surprisingly, he has no memory of scoring this try. Earlier in the game, O'Connell received an elbow to the head while attempting to make a tackle. This left him with a concussion. O'Connell was substituted before half-time after an examination by the team doctor. O'Connell became an important part of the Irish team and was part of the 2004 Six Nations team. Ireland went on to win the Triple Crown for the first time in 19 years, with O'Connell playing his part in a dramatic victory over England.



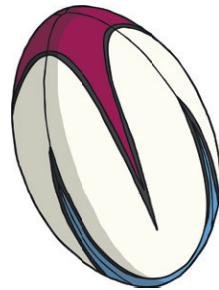
Paul O'Connell scored the last ever try at the Old Lansdowne Road Stadium before it was demolished and rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium. He also captained Ireland against France in 2007, the first rugby match ever played in Croke Park.

Paul O'Connell was vital in Ireland's 2009 Six Nations campaign. He was part of the team that claimed Ireland's first Grand Slam victory in 61 years. The Grand Slam is when one team wins every one of their matches in the Six Nations Championship. O'Connell was also named captain of the 2009 British and Irish Lions team. Paul O'Connell's reputation as a true leader led to him being named as the captain of Ireland at the beginning of the 2015 Six Nations tournament. O'Connell was crucial in Ireland's championship victory, retaining the trophy they had claimed the previous year. O'Connell received the Player of the Championship award. He was also voted as the Irish Rugby Union Players Association (IRUPA) Player of the Year for 2015.

A Career Ending Injury

Paul O'Connell announced that he would retire from international rugby after the 2015 Rugby World Cup. He also revealed that he would leave Munster following the World Cup and join Toulon, a French rugby team. O'Connell was named as the

captain of Ireland's World Cup squad. He played a key role in Ireland's opening three matches of the Word Cup; however, he suffered a serious hamstring injury in Ireland's fourth game against France. The injury required surgery, which ruled him out of the rest of the World Cup. The injury ended his international career. Following advice from medical professionals, Paul O'Connell announced his retirement from all rugby on the 9th February 2016. His injury meant he never played a professional game for Toulon. Paul O'Connell made an incredible 178 appearances for Munster. He also finished his career as Ireland's third most-capped player, having appeared in 108 international games for his country.



Paul O'Connell's autobiography is called *The Battle*. O'Connell recalls his development from a young talented swimmer into an iconic figure in international rugby. This book was named as the Irish Sports Book of the Year 2016.

Awards

Paul O'Connell had an extremely successful career, winning many trophies and awards. O'Connell won the European Rugby Champions Cup on two occasions, and won the Celtic League three times. O'Connell won the Six Nations Championship with Ireland in 2009, 2014 and 2015. The victory in 2009 also consisted of the Grand Slam, in which they were victorious over every other team in the competition.

Paul O'Connell married his wife, Emily O'Leary, in July 2013. They have three children, Paddy, Lola and Felix.

Coaching and Media Career

Paul O'Connell joined Munster Rugby's Academy in an advisory role in July 2016. O'Connell became assistant coach with the Ireland Under-20s in 2017. He is currently a coach with Stade Français. O'Connell has also enjoyed success in the media, joining BBC Sport as a pundit and commentator before the 2017 Six Nations Tournament.

Questions

1. When was Paul O'Connell born?

2. What sport was Paul O'Connell involved in before rugby? At what age did he begin playing rugby?

3. What did Paul O'Connell study at the University of Limerick?

4. What happened to Paul O'Connell on his debut for Ireland?

5. What two awards did Paul O'Connell receive in 2015?

6. How many appearances did Paul O'Connell make for Munster? How many games did he play for Ireland?

7. What French club did Paul O'Connell agree to join after the World Cup?

8. How did you think Paul O'Connell felt after injuring his hamstring in the 2015 World Cup?

9. What did you find most interesting about Paul O'Connell?

Answer

- When was Paul O'Connell born?

Paul O'Connell was involved in swimming before he began playing rugby. He began playing rugby at the age of 16.

- What sport was Paul O'Connell involved in before rugby? At what age did he begin playing rugby?

Paul O'Connell was a lock. Locks form the second row of the scrum. They are the main targets for lineout throws. They are usually lifted into the air by other teammates to try and catch the ball.

- What did Paul O'Connell study at the University of Limerick?

Paul O'Connell studied computer engineering at the University of Limerick.

- What happened to Paul O'Connell on his debut for Ireland?

Paul O'Connell received an elbow to the head while attempting to make a tackle. This left him with a concussion. He was substituted before half-time.

- What two awards did Paul O'Connell receive in 2015?

Paul O'Connell received the Player of the Six Nations Championship award. He was also voted as the Irish Union Players Association (IRUPA) Player of the Year for 2015.

- How many appearances did Paul O'Connell make for Munster? How many games did he play for Ireland?

Paul O'Connell made an incredible 178 appearances for Munster. He also made 108 appearances for Ireland.

- What French club did Paul O'Connell agree to join after the World Cup?

Paul O'Connell agreed to join Toulon after the Rugby World Cup.

- How did you think Paul O'Connell felt after injuring his hamstring in the 2015 World Cup?

Answers may vary.

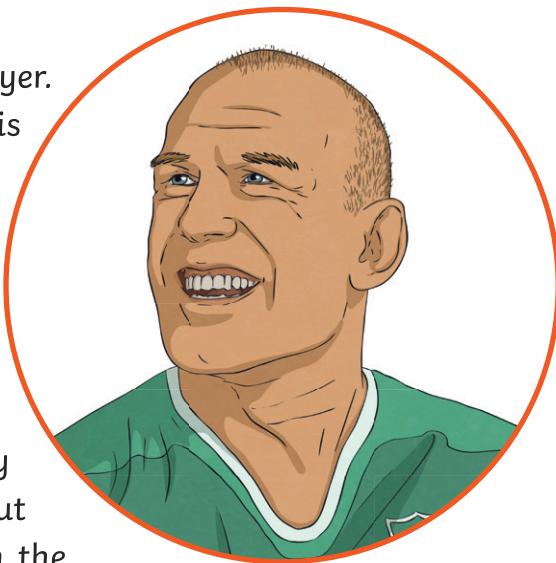
- What did you find most interesting about Paul O'Connell?

Answers may vary.

Paul O'Connell

Early Years

Paul O'Connell is a retired Irish rugby player. He is an iconic Irish sports star, and is widely regarded as one of rugby's finest and most respected players. O'Connell was born in County Limerick on 20th October 1979. Interestingly, O'Connell initially excelled at swimming with Seal Swimming club, spending up to fifteen hours a week training in the pool. He only began playing rugby at the age of 16, but his years of swimming provided him with the competitive instinct and work ethic to become one of rugby's elite players. Paul attended Ardscoil Rís, an all-boys Roman Catholic school in Limerick. He represented his school in the Munster Schools Rugby Senior Cup. Several other Irish professional rugby players have also represented their schools in the Munster Schools Rugby Senior Cup, including Ronan O'Gara and Simon Zebo. Paul O'Connell also played on the Irish Schoolboys Rugby team. The Irish Schoolboys Rugby team is the national team for secondary school students in Ireland. The team represents the nation against the youth teams of other nations.



Paul O'Connell completed 3 years of a computer engineering degree at the University of Limerick. He did not complete this course, deferring the remainder of his degree to concentrate on his extremely promising rugby career.



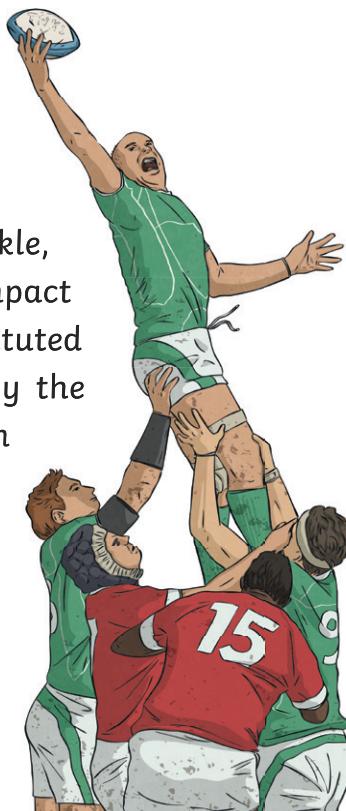
Munster

Paul O'Connell signed his first professional contract with Munster Rugby. O'Connell stands at a massive six foot six inches in height. As one of the tallest players on the rugby pitch, O'Connell was a natural lock. Locks are the primary target for lineouts, usually lifted into the air and supported by other teammates in an effort to compete for the ball. They also form the second row of a scrum and compete in the scrum.

Paul O'Connell made his Munster debut on 17th August 2001 in a clash against Edinburgh. O'Connell was part of the 2003 Celtic League winning squad. He quickly became a crucial member of the squad and was integral to Munster's European Rugby Champions Cup success in 2006. Munster defeated Biarritz in the final of the tournament. O'Connell quickly became revered as one of the most consistent rugby players in the Northern Hemisphere. His consistently impressive performances and natural leadership led to his selection as Munster captain in 2007, succeeding Munster legend Anthony Foley. O'Connell led Munster to their second European Rugby Champions Cup triumph in 2008, defeating Toulouse in the final. He also captained the side in their 2011 Celtic League victory over fierce provincial rivals, Leinster.

Carrying a Nation

Paul O'Connell made his international debut against Wales in the 2002 Six Nations tournament. He scored a fantastic try following an Irish lineout; however, although he has no recollection of scoring this try. Earlier in the game, O'Connell received an elbow to the head while attempting to make a tackle, resulting in a concussion. Despite making a great impact on his international debut, O'Connell was substituted shortly before half-time following an examination by the team doctor. O'Connell's importance in the Irish team began to grow, and this was evident when he was selected as captain for Ireland's opening game of the 2004 Six Nations tournament. Ireland's regular captain, Brian O'Driscoll, was absent from the side. Ireland went on to win the Triple Crown for the first time in 19 years, with O'Connell playing his part in a dramatic last-minute victory over England.



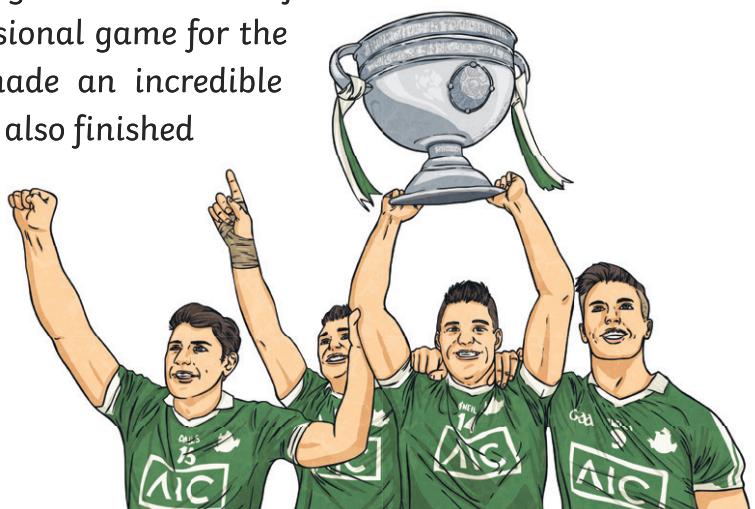
Paul O'Connell scored the last ever try at the old Lansdowne Road Stadium before it was demolished and rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium. He also captained Ireland in a historic match against France in 2007, the first rugby match ever played in Croke Park.

Paul O'Connell played a vital role in Ireland's 2009 Six Nations campaign, producing key moments in games and leading Ireland to a first Grand Slam victory in 61 years. The Grand Slam is when one team wins every one of their matches in the Six Nations Championship. O'Connell was also named captain of the 2009 British and Irish Lions team. Having previously captained the side in the absence of Brian O'Driscoll, Paul O'Connell's reputation as a true leader was sealed when he was named as the captain of Ireland at the beginning of the 2015 Six Nations tournament. O'Connell was instrumental in Ireland's championship victory, retaining the trophy they had claimed the previous year. Paul O'Connell received the Player of the Championship award for his monumental display throughout the tournament. He was also voted as the Irish Rugby Union Players Association (IRUPA) Player of the Year for 2015.

A Career Ending Injury

Paul O'Connell announced that he would retire from international rugby after the 2015 Rugby World Cup. He also revealed that he had agreed an early release from his contract with Munster. He intended to leave Munster following his final World Cup and join Toulon, a French rugby team. O'Connell was named as the captain of the Irish squad who would contest for the World Cup. Paul O'Connell played a key role in Ireland's opening three matches of the Word Cup, however his fortune changed in Ireland's fourth game against France. O'Connell suffered a serious hamstring injury when competing for the ball.

The injury required surgery, which ruled him out of the remainder of the World Cup and prematurely ended his international career. Despite efforts to return to club rugby, Paul O'Connell was forced to announce his retirement from all rugby on the 9th February 2016, following advice from medical professionals. This meant that despite signing a contract to join Toulon, he never played a professional game for the French team. Paul O'Connell made an incredible 178 appearances for Munster. He also finished his career as Ireland's third most-capped player, having appeared in 108 international games for his country across a glorious career.



Accolades

Paul O'Connell had an extremely successful career, winning many trophies and awards on his way to becoming a rugby legend. O'Connell won the European Rugby Champions Cup on two occasions, also claiming the Pro14 trophy three times. O'Connell also won the Six Nations Championship with Ireland in 2009, 2014 and 2015. The victory in 2009 also consisted of the Grand Slam, in which they were victorious over every other team in the competition.

Paul O'Connell married his wife, Emily O'Leary, in July 2013. They have three children, Paddy, Lola and Felix.

Coaching and Media Career

Paul O'Connell joined Munster Rugby's Academy in an advisory role in July 2016. O'Connell became assistant coach with the Ireland Under-20s in 2017. He is currently a coach with Stade Français. O'Connell has also enjoyed success in the media, joining BBC Sport as a pundit and commentator before the 2017 Six Nations Tournament.

Questions

1. What benefit did swimming have on Paul O'Connell's rugby career?

2. What sport was Paul O'Connell involved in before rugby?

3. What is the role of a lock? Why was Paul O'Connell a 'natural lock'?

4. Why was Paul O'Connell substituted on his debut? How do you think Paul O'Connell felt after being substituted?

5. Why did Ireland play against France in Croke Park in 2007? Why was this an historic match?

6. Why did Paul O'Connell not play a professional game for Toulon?

7. What team is Paul O'Connell currently coaching?

8. How do you think Paul O'Connell felt after injuring his hamstring in the 2015 World Cup? Explain your answer.

9. What did you find most interesting about Paul O'Connell?

Answers

- What benefit did swimming have on Paul O'Connell's rugby career?

Paul O'Connell's years of swimming provided him with the competitive instinct and work ethic to become one of rugby's elite players.

- What sport was Paul O'Connell involved in before rugby?

Paul O'Connell was involved in swimming before he began playing rugby.

- What is the role of a lock? Why was Paul O'Connell a 'natural lock'?

Locks are the main target for line-outs, usually lifted into the air and supported by other teammates in an effort to compete for the ball. Locks form the second row of a scrum and compete in the scrum. Paul O'Connell was a natural lock because he was one of the tallest players on the rugby pitch. This gave him an advantage in catching the ball from a lineout throw.

- Why was Paul O'Connell substituted on his debut? How do you think Paul O'Connell felt after being substituted?

Paul O'Connell received an elbow to the head while attempting to make a tackle, resulting in a concussion. O'Connell was substituted shortly after before half-time following an examination by the team doctor.

- Why did Ireland play against France in Croke Park in 2007? Why was this an historic match?

Ireland played against France in Croke Park because Lansdowne Road was being demolished and rebuilt as the Aviva Stadium. This was a historic match because it was the first rugby match ever played in Croke Park.

- Why did Paul O'Connell not play a professional game for Toulon?

Paul O'Connell is a coach for Stade Français

- What team is Paul O'Connell currently coaching?

Paul O'Connell suffered a serious hamstring injury in the 2015 World Cup. He did not play a game for Toulon because he was advised by medical professionals to retire from rugby.

- How do you think Paul O'Connell felt after injuring his hamstring in the 2015 World Cup?

Explain your answer.

Answers may vary.

- What did you find most interesting about Paul O'Connell?

Answers may vary.