

Publication: The Irish Sun

Date: 9 June 2013

Size: 2/3 Page

1R

ROAD TO RIO

You'd go through a brick wall for the man

By OWEN COWZER

GIOVANNI TRAPATTONI is still a top manager and his players know that, according to Damien Duff.

Trap is in New York today preparing Ireland for Tuesday's friendly against Spain. The Italian has turned fortunes around in 2012 after a disastrous 2011, which saw him come close to losing his job following a horrific European Championships, a lucky win in Kazakhstan and a 6-1 hammering by Germany. But the FAI stood by him, albeit while making new demands including that he stop publicly falling out with players.

Darron Gibson and Stephen Kelly are the most recent stars that he has criticised in public. But Duff insists that the team are all behind 'The Trap' - as he affectionately calls him.

The Fulham winger, who called time on his own Ireland career after Euro 2012, pointed out that Trap has never fallen out with a member of his starting XI. Duff said: "He's a top manager, you only have to look at his CV. He's such a charismatic guy, you can't help but love him. You would run through a brick wall for him."

Barrier

"If you speak to any of the lads in the team they'd speak the same way. I know he's had fallings out with a few of them, whether that's the language barrier or what, but from my personal point of view I've always understood what he's said to me. I suppose most of the time it's been players who haven't been in the team, and I think it's the same at any level. You never see any players having a pop at the manager when they're starting."

Duff's respect for Trap meant that he almost put off his international retirement plans last year.

But he has no regrets and said: "We had chats but I said no one was going to change my mind. He did go close, but that was it."

But he still plans to stay up late on Tuesday night to watch Ireland play the world champions, who beat them 4-0 at the Euros.

He added: "Spain in New York, it'd be nice to turn them over after last year's drubbing."

©ccowzer



NEW ROLE... Damien Duff is the new charity ambassador of Heart Children Ireland, a support group for those affected by congenital heart disorders