

SPECIAL DIET AND A FAKE TRANCE

by WAYNE MOONEY

STEVE Collins loves nothing better than a good curry, be it homemade or otherwise.

But over the last seven weeks he's been forced to live a more spartan life.

A special diet to increase his weight from the middleweight of 11st 6ozs to the super-middleweight of 12 stone was put in place seven weeks ago.

"My trainer Freddie King and Dr Tony Quinn sorted out a diet suitable for my needs. It was quite simple really. I had porridge with some plain yogurt for breakfast, plenty of vegetables and some white meat for lunch and a dinner of pasta and lean mince or chicken, again with plenty of vegetables."

Collins now plans to continue his association with Dr Tony Quinn and looks forward to his assistance in the build-up to his next fight.

CONNED

"People see Tony as only a hypnotist, but you have to remember that he is an expert in the field of diet and he's no stranger to contact sports, having trained in martial arts.

"I was heading out to Vegas for my training camp and I asked Tony to come along to help out with the preparations, and it was in Vegas that he came up with the idea of conning Eubank.

"I pretended Tony had put me in a trance in the weigh-in for the fight, and when a journalist asked Eubank about me having no pain barrier it was all I could do not to burst out laughing.

"When Eubank came out with all this fierce stuff I knew I was winning the mind games and that's half the battle with Eubank," said Collins.

'Surrounded by sweating in party dresses, their frenzy, I almost thought



□ TIRED, BUT TRIUMPHANT: A virtually unmarked Collins after the fight

IT WAS pure noise. A roar of jumbo jets in a thunder storm while an earthquake rumbled below. The Green Glens Arena shook and it rolled out of the darkness, smothering the ring and turning the air to sludge.

It was the fifth round and homeboy Stephen Collins showed signs of dominating rude boy Chris Eubank. As Stephen's accurate left jabs gave way to a flurry of connecting blows, a capacity crowd provided an extra stab in the guts for Eubank, the man they saw as an imperious popinjay.

The jolly Mexican Waving "Ole Ole Ole" spirit gave way to violent bloodlust as many of the fans bellowed like primeval beasts. "Kill the black bastard". "Hit the f...ing nigger".

FRENZIED

Surrounded by sweating men in tuxedos and women in party dresses, their faces twisted in orgiastic frenzy, I was almost convinced I'd landed in Dante's Inferno. But this grim Breughlesque scene wasn't a nightmare or an episode of Star Trek. This was a showjumping arena in Ireland in 1995.

Eamon Carr



A Russian friend is fond of saying: "In a fight the rich man tries to save his face, the poor man his coat." She could have been talking about Collins and Eubank.

For 12 gruelling three minute rounds, these two gladiators stalked each other, taunted each other and attempted to out-manoeuvre each other. They also beat each other. Relentlessly.

But like a poor man trying to save his few belongings Stephen was the more determined to win. He boxed like a man possessed. Some say he was a man possessed. Certainly when he entered the ring, he was a hooded figure of mystery, seemingly lost in some trance like state induced by his bearded shaman Tony Quinn. Whether it was ruse or not, the tactic worked.

As fireworks on the back wall of the venue spelt out the name 'Eubank', the boxer was raised aloft on his Harley-Davidson, like a mutant Minotaur, muscles and motorbike gleaming.

PAGEANTRY

It was a dash of showbiz pageantry which almost deluded one into thinking we'd come to a pop pantomime with Meatloaf and not a venomous slug-fest between two fierce adversaries.

Throughout all the hullabaloo, Collins reclined in his corner. His rock soundtrack cassette helped him ignore Eubank's ritual chest-beating display.

Some say this bout was won before the contestants ever stepped into the ring.

Certainly the mind games had been going on since the controversial press conference in Dublin that launched the event. They resumed at the weigh-in when it was alleged that Stephen was employing a hypnotist to help him prepare mentally for the challenge.

The war of nerves continued throughout the 12-round contest, with the unprecedented appearance of yoga guru Tony Quinn in Collins' corner, apparently massaging the Cabra-man's chakras (the psychic powerhouses which New Age therapists believe regulate the forcefields of the body's energy flow) and whispering hypnotic hocus-pocus ("Give him a dig, great Celtic Warrior"?).

Whether it was just acting the idiot or something more profound, the play appeared to work and Stephen advanced in strength until he walked into a crushing right hook in the tenth round.

A civic reception

IRELAND'S latest world champion Steve Collins is to get a civic reception in Dublin on Wednesday.

Collins will leave Parnell Square on an open-top bus at 1pm and travel down O'Connell Street, College Green, Nassau Street to Dawson Street before being honoured by the city at the Mansion House.

He will be feted in a ceremony outside the Lord Mayor's residence before going inside to a reception.

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