



STAN DOWN

**NO motivation
NO respect, NO
brain.. we're an
embarrassment**

**FANS CALL FOR STAUNTON TO GO
AFTER HUMILIATION IN CYPRUS**

FAI backing their man as anger grows

By GERALDINE COMISKEY

FAI officials vowed yesterday that Steve Staunton would not be given the red card.

A spokesman said: "Steve Staunton has the full backing of the Football Association of Ireland."

Sources have also confirmed that FAI chiefs had moved quickly to assure players that Staunton would be staying.

The organisation's president David Blunt and chief executive John Delaney meet the squad when they returned to the hotel after Saturday's game.

Blunt and Delaney gave the players and management a pep-talk at an after-match dinner.

And yesterday's training session was replaced by a meeting at which players got to air the views on what had happened.

An FAI source said: "There was a very strong exchange of opinions. It was a clear-the-air exercise."

"You can understand everybody's disappointed. We thought we'd beat Cyprus and it was a nasty shock."

"Whether or not it will demoralise the players depends on the lads themselves. Of course it's not nice to be booed by your own people when you've played a match for your country."

"We should see it in perspective. It was just one match we played badly. These things happen in football. Look at Scotland beating France 1-0. Ireland were the underdogs once. Sometimes we don't get it all our way."

Asked if there was any truth in the rumour Kenny Dalglish was being tipped to take Staunton's job before Euro 2008, the source added: "None whatsoever. That's absolutely untrue. Steve Staunton is the manager and we're happy with him. He's doing a great job."



7-1 he'll go by Czech game

By MIRROR REPORTER

UNDER fire Steve Staunton got another pasting yesterday - by the bookies.

Paddy Power made him the 7-1 favourite to lose his job before Wednesday's match against the Czech Republic.

They quoted odds of 5-6 that the Drogheda man would not be at the helm for the Euro 2008 qualifying campaign.

William Hill raised the odds on his leaving from 4-6 to 4-9 after Saturday night's humiliating defeat by Cyprus.

One Hills spokesman said: "Straight after the final whistle we were inundated with requests for Steve Staunton to leave before the end of the qualifiers. After several hefty wagers we were forced to slash the price."

A poll on website www.foot.ie revealed 63 per cent of fans would prefer another manager.

Punters are already placing bets on replacements for Staunton.

David O'Leary is the favourite, with Paddy Power giving him odds of 3-1.

Roy Keane and John Aldridge were hot on his heels, each tipped at 6-1.

Ray Houghton and Terry Venables are also serious contenders at 10-1.

Niall Quinn is tipped at 20-1, Brian Kerr at 25-1 and Michael O'Leary the outsider at 500-1.

(also see)