



# THOMOND PARK STADIUM, LIMERICK

LIMERICK'S THOMOND PARK STADIUM IS HOME TO 2008 HEINEKEN CUP CHAMPIONS MUNSTER. A €40M REDEVELOPMENT HAS CREATED A CONFERCING FACILITY WITH SUITES FOR 500 AND 200, MAKING IT THE BIGGEST FACILITY IN IRELAND

The main bar area has capacity for up to 1,500 inside and 5,000 on the outdoor plaza. Concert events hold 45,000. Shannon Airport serviced by budget airline Ryanair is close by.

Some 15,000 new seats and a new stand boosted capacity to 26,000. The beloved original terracing and intense match-day atmosphere have been kept. Facilities include an interactive museum, a 2,000 square foot Munster Rugby store and food and drink facilities on every level. There are also picnic areas for families.

New Zealand's All Blacks paid a recent visit, their Haka faced down by Munster's confident squad and their own Kiwi players. The Blacks were held to an 18-16 victory. They beat England 44-12 in June, 2008.

Limerick is developing and local businesses such as hoteliers, shopkeepers, airports are looking forward to the increased traffic

Thomond will generate.

Stadium Director John Cantwell joined late last year and one of his first tasks was to appoint the crucially important catering contractor. But there is an average of just 12 home match days per year ([www.munsterrugby.ie](http://www.munsterrugby.ie)).

Conference and event business is at the core of development. Candidates were asked to tender and would have to take a very flexible approach.

Four submissions proved worthy and Julian Fris FCSI, of facilities management consultancy Neller Davies was brought in to evaluate the responses.

Just one chart from the many within a report Fris quickly generated shows the detail involved and how potential contractors were assessed. (See page 35 for chart.)





Thomond was looking for a minimum return over the total span of the business including all matches and the other 353 days of the year.

After all consideration of the submissions, two candidates were tied for the contract.

But how do you separate them and find a clear winner?

It is not unusual to find such a close run contest when tendering contracts. Fris employed his usual frank and open approach and briefed the two remaining contenders. They had to raise their game to win.

'In the field' visits to the candidate's existing contracts provided

feedback on food presentation and merchandising, staff training, food quality and wastage, cleanliness and hygiene.

Fris and Cantwell had their result. But in the meantime the two candidates had responded with improvements to their original submissions.

Masterchefs Hospitality was the eventual winner and had an existing cook-chill facility, which prepared food for their events business. The offer was to move this into Thomond which generated some revenue for the stadium and provided Masterchefs staff on site and on call to meet the fluctuating demand. Thomond events took precedence.

Far left  
Munster Rugby team were on top form during their match against New Zealand's All Blacks

Above  
The newly redeveloped home of Munster Rugby team

Below  
The stadium's main bar area has a capacity for up to 1,500 inside and 5,000 on the outdoor plaza



● MEETS CONTRACT SPECIFICATION ● FAILS TO MEET CONTRACT SPECIFICATION ● PARTIALLY MEETS CONTRACT SPECIFICATION

	COMPANY	1 COMPANY	2 COMPANY	3 COMPANY
Company Profile & History	●	●	●	●
Experience & Client Reference Listing	●	●	●	●
Financial & Trading History	●	●	●	●
Financial Offer	●	●	●	●
Sales Projections	●	●	●	●
Mobilisation & Start Up Strategy	●	●	●	●
Service Level Agreements	●	●	●	●
Proposed Key Performance Indicators	●	●	●	●
Sales & Marketing Proposals	●	●	●	●
Menus & Pricing & Bar Tariffs	●	●	●	●
Proposed Suppliers & Discounts	●	●	●	●
Proposed Management Structure	●	●	●	●
Proposed Staffing Structure	●	●	●	●
Employment Policy incl rates of pay, terms & conditions	●	●	●	●
Training & Development	●	●	●	●
Customer Service Procedure	●	●	●	●
Uniform Proposals	●	●	●	●
Service Ware including crockery, cutlery & glassware	●	●	●	●
Kitchen & Equipment Maintenance	●	●	●	●
Point of Sale Equipment Proposal	●	●	●	●
Table Clearance Procedures	●	●	●	●
Waste Management Strategy	●	●	●	●
Health & Safety Policy	●	●	●	●
Food Hygiene & Legislation Compliance	●	●	●	●
Insurance Details	●	●	●	●
SCORE	98%	98%	70%	45%

Masterchefs ran a substantial events trade and also offered to place one of their Sales Executives into the Thomond conference/events marketing office where the closer collaboration would help to bring in new business.

Another major strength in the Masterchefs bid was their labour to sales ratio – the number of staff on hand to serve food/drink and take the money. Coupled with this was their food quality standard and belief that higher food quality would sell better and generate less wastage.

The ratio was 38% labour to sales for food overall on average with conferencing, for example, higher at 55% and the kiosk business much less. A lower return on food for the contractor would be balanced out by better service and higher volume sales. Bar operational ratio, which is a more efficient process, was 28%.

‘Business exposure’ is quoted by Fris as another plus point for the winner. Not only was the contractor’s Operations Director based in Limerick, the company also ran a chain of Molly Malone restaurants locally. Between 10 and 30% exposure is ‘ideal’ and Thomond would generate some 20% of Masterchefs turnover, leaving them focussed and hungry for more.

The Managing Director and senior staff are going to visit the site and take a close interest in developments. The ‘flip-side’ of this scenario is apparent if the ‘exposure’ value for your contract is only a few % – how much value will the contractor place on your business?

Cantwell was so impressed by the performance of Fris and his team, he has since recommended them to the Ulster Rugby Club.

“The entire process is totally independent and fully auditable,”

says Fris. “The clever thing was the ability to put the tender evaluation process in place even at a late stage and to provide opportunities for the bidding contractors to add value. We also handled all legal aspects including the drawing up of contracts and the signing, where contracts often run into difficulty. The catering contractor and Thomond Park are each fully committed to the task of generating a substantial return over the next five years.”



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