

Sport Endorse duo invest in bid to build global client list



Trevor Twamley, left, and Declan Bourke, co-founders of agency Sport Endorse, at the National Indoor Arena in Abbotstown, Dublin. Photo: Steve Humphreys

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The founders of Ireland's newest sports agency have hatched a plan to win more work in international markets after investing their own money to build an impressive Irish client list.

Sport Endorse - set up by former Setanta Ireland commercial director Trevor Twamley and former Irish head of CMC Markets Declan Bourke - now represents more than 40 well-known names including newly retired Kerry GAA star Kieran Donaghy, Irish Rugby international CJ Stander, cricket stars the O'Brien brothers, boxer Jason Quigley, swimmer Shane Ryan, jockey Robbie Power and Cork camogie star Ashling Thompson.

The pair - who recently invested €100,000 each in the business - also represent the Irish interests of UK sports people like Robbie Fowler, Terry Venables, John Barnes, Chris Waddle and Chris Kamara.

"Our pre-money valuation at the moment is somewhere between €1m and €2m, based on what is coming in the door now and projecting that in a non-aggressive way for the next 12 months," said Bourke. "We are going into America and the UK, aiming to have a client base with two or three athletes in every discipline. This is a huge growth business. A lot of companies are looking for a brand ambassador from the world of sport.

"Often it is the perceived niche sports that are doing the best. Look at the women's hockey team and what they have achieved."

But, said Twamley, it can be difficult to know where to start for athletes hoping to monetise their brand. Sports Endorse is targeting a relatively under-served portion of the market, he said.

"The very top tier of elite athletes are already well looked after in this regard but below that there are a whole bunch of sports people who are doing their best and who are achieving wonderful things but who are largely ignored," said Twamley.

"If we can help provide them with a certain level of financial support through sponsorships and endorsements then it will alleviate the pressure and allow them to concentrate on being the very best they can be." He added that his experience in sports television meant he knew how valuable sport can be "in terms of eyeballs".