

Juvenile Cross Country PRO Report

What a strange and unsettling year 2020 was. It began as normal with whispers of a virus doing the rounds in far flung China, little did we know that it would put a stop to life as we knew it. Early in the year the Irish Life Health National Juvenile "B", Inter & Juvenile Inter Club Relays took place. Rathdrum in Co. Wicklow played host to the National Juvenile "B" Cross Country last Saturday 8th February. Storm Ciara didn't get in the way of this event early on for the juvenile races as large numbers raced around the varied course. There was immediate success for a Tipperary athlete in the form of Leah Berry of Newport A.C. She finished 2nd in the Girls U/11 race to claim a national silver medal. Alana Spillane of Moyne A.C. ran a good race to finish 8th in the Girls U/13 race. Orla Ryan of Dundrum A.C. finished an impressive 8th in the Girls U/15 race with Ruby Carroll of Clonmel A.C. close behind in 11th place. Congratulations to all Tipperary athletes who took part in the event. Irish Life Health Irish Schools XC Championships were up next. Congrats to our medal winners Ben Walshe, CBS Nenagh, 6th Minor Boys, Siobhan Whelan, Rockwell College (4th Senior Girls), Shane Buckley, Cashel CS, 7th Junior Boys & the Ursuline Convent Thurles (Kate Ferncombe, Orla Ryan, Paula Quirke, Aoibhinn Fogarty, Grace Fitzpatrick Ryan & Niamh Hayes), 3rd Team in Junior Girls. Sunday 4th October saw the much-anticipated return to county cross country competition in county Tipperary. Weeks of planning and county board Zoom meetings culminated in a very successful event being held on a typically windy and damp day in Newport. On arrival at the venue it was immediately evident how much work the host club, Newport AC, had put into implementing the HSE and Athletics Ireland safety guidelines. There were plenty of information and directional signs visible and an abundance of stewards guiding those who were arriving into the new normal of cross country in Covid times. County and club Covid Officers were very visible, ensuring that all those entering and leaving the competition area were using masks and hand sanitiser etc. The young athletes are to be commended on how they conducted themselves on the day. They followed the instructions of the stewards and utilised the warm up area and kept their social distance before and after each race. Their excitement and nerves were evident and it was clear that they were all looking forward to getting stuck into the first county cross country races of the season. These young athletes didn't let the new rules and restrictions faze them or get in the way of their running ambitions. The u10 girls kicked off the races in this day of even age competition with a quick 800m race. Leah O Connell Moycarkey Coolcree AC won the race with Taylor O'Toole of Dundrum AC 2nd and Neasa Moloney of Mooreabbey Milers AC completing the medal winners. Dundrum AC took team gold, Moyne AC took silver and Newport AC took the bronze team medal. The boys u10 race was up next with 1st going to Albert Maher of Dundrum AC, 2nd was Luke Duggan of Templemore AC and 3rd was Niall Quirke of Dundrum AC. Dundrum AC won the gold team medal, Newport AC won the team silver and Moyne took the bronze team medal. A good race was had in the girls u12 race with 1st place going to Aoife O'Donnell from Moycarkey Coolcree AC, 2nd was Leah Berry from Newport AC, Ruth O'Connell of Moycarkey Coolcree AC was 3rd. Newport AC took the gold team medal in this race, Moyne AC won the silver and Moycarkey Coolcree won the bronze team medal. In a competitive boys u12 race Colm Ryan of Newport AC was a convincing winner with David Moran of Mooreabbey Milers AC making up good ground to take 2nd place and Rian Horgan of Newport AC winning bronze. Newport AC won the team gold, Moycarkey Coolcree AC took silver and Dundrum AC won bronze in the team event. Moving up in distance with age we saw the u14s running 3000m in total. Congratulations to Jennifer O'Leary of Nenagh Olympic AC, Clodagh Grimes of Newport AC and Alana Spillane of Moyne AC who filled the top three positions respectively. Newport AC won the gold team medal, Moyne AC took silver and Dundrum AC took bronze. In the boy's race Diarmuid Moloney of Nenagh Olympic AC ran a very strong race to take gold with Daire O'Donnell of Moycarkey Coolcree AC taking silver and Charlie Tobin of Newport AC taking the bronze medal. Moyne AC won the gold team medal. Dundrum AC filled the top three places in the girls u16 race. Well done to Millie Kelly Dundrum AC, Orla Ryan Dundrum AC and Paula Quirke Dundrum AC. They won the team gold also with Moyne AC winning silver and Newport AC winning bronze. In the boys race Shane Buckley of Dundrum AC ran well to take 1st place, Thomas Bergin of Nenagh Olympic AC was 2nd and Aaron

Moore of Moyne AC was 3rd. Moyne's two teams to the gold and silver team medals. Ailbhe O'Neill of Nenagh Olympic AC held off the charge of all the Clonmel AC girls to win the u18 race. Laura Cooney of Clonmel AC was 2nd and Emma Murray of Clonmel AC was 3rd. Clonmel AC won the gold and silver team medals. Nenagh Olympic AC had a clean sweep of the top three places in the boys u18 race. Well done to James Tanner 1st, Jamie Moloney 2nd and Luke Purcell 3rd. The boys from Nenagh won the team gold as a result.

Athletics Ireland spread the word of a new initiative in November. More than 4600 Juveniles took on the RDO Virtual Winter Challenge across Ireland. This was a response to the complete lack of competition in Ireland due to Covid 19. There were well over 4600 individual results to upload more than 120 different clubs! This proved to be a great celebration of running and congratulations to all who took part from the county.

The vaccine may have arrived but as numbers stand at the moment it'll be a while before we get back to normal. Thanks to the county board for their great efforts during 2020.

Tricia Ryan
Juvenile Cross Country PRO