

Br John Dooley and Athletics

Aug 1986- Aug 1994

From August '86 to June '88 I lived in the M.S as a member of the Christian Brothers community in all Hallows, the Bronx, New York. I obtained an M.A(Theology) in St Johns University, specialising in youth Ministry. During those two years I was fortunate to be part of the College athletic scene, most weekends I travelled to cross-country, indoor and outdoor meets. I saw at first hand the ultra-competitiveness, the international standards and the singular emphasis on winning, especially on the team success- which are the hallmarks of N.C.A.A athletics.

I visited many Universities and colleges where Irish were on scholarship, I discussed with coaches their requirements and expectations of foreign athletes. I cheered Irish successes at the Big East conferences, I.C.4.A Regionals and N.C.A.A championships. Penn Relays and Millrose games were magical experiences. The World Indoor Championships '84 in Indianapolis were memorable with the twin gold medals from Marcus O' Sullivan (1500m) and Frank O Mara (3k). Paul Donovan's silver in the 3k made these the most successful championships ever for Irish athletics.

In August '88 I joined the North Monastery community as Superior and the North Mon school as staff member No.38. From my M.S experience I was convinced that many Irish athletes were ill prepared and too young for U.S scholarships athletic. North Mon provided a post leaving cert Certificate Vocational Preparation and Training Programme (VPTP) and I saw this as an ideal way to prepare athletes for the M.S. VPTP provided them with an extra year, to mature, to build up their mileage, to acquire new skills, e.g., typing, computer literacy, driving, life skills etc. It also allowed them to do an extra subject in the Leaving Cert if they did not have the right combination

of subjects for N.C.A.A academic eligibility. V.P.T.P also timetabled S.A.T in maths and English. This gave me the opportunity to prepare athletes and basketballers who wished to go to college in the U.S

During my first year in the Mon, I was fortunate to have two exceptional young people. Mark Carrol (European Junior 5000m champion) and Declan 'O Callaghan (U.S Junior Cross-Country silver medallist) who led to Mon to their first of six in a row Irish Schools Senior cross country team titles. Mark and Declan were also ideal Role models for the younger athletes who made up the successful intermediate, Junior and Minor teams.

Edward o' Carroll having completed his Leaving cert in Mayfield C.S in 1988 joined VPTP class and was the first of the group to win a scholarship, flying out to western Kentucky University in August 1989. He was followed by CF. Simon Linscheid 1995.