

Maria Fitzgibbon and Kevin Moore – County Intermediate Champions

The Turnpike was the venue for the County Intermediate Cross Country Championships last Sunday. The Course was once again in very good condition and great credit must go to Moycarkey Coolcree and thanks indeed to Donal Hayes for the use of his lands for these Championships. In the Ladies race Maria Fitzgibbon of Thurles Crokes ran a great race, moving well clear of the chasing pack on the 2nd lap to come home a very worthy Champion. Maria was achieving the County Novice / Intermediate double. The last Thurles Crokes athlete to achieve that feat was Martina Ryan in 2003. Then we had a great race for the minor placings with it all to play for with 600m to go. Then Catherine Kelly of Dundrum found an extra gear and moved into 2nd place and held on to win the Silver medal, great to see Catherine back competing again. Then we had Aine Roche of Clonmel withstanding a strong challenge from her club mate Johanna Lacy to win the Bronze medal. For the record 5th Catherine Rice Clonmel, 6th Laura Burke Coolquill, 7th Francis Long Moyne, 8th Jacqueline Hughes Thurles Crokes, 9th Trish Blackburn Moore Abbey Milers and 10th Laura Rice Fethard. In the team event Clonmel won the Gold medals which they last won in 2009. Then we had Moyne winning the Silver medals for the very first time in Athletics Ireland and the team included Francis Long, Breda McNamara 11th and Aisling Maher 12th, great to see all the hard work paying off. The Moore Abbey Club continues to make great strides in their first season and on Sunday last captured their first set of Intermediate medals when winning the Bronze medals., their winning team were Trish Blackburn, 14th Patricia Ryan and 15th Carol Quish.

The Men's race also attracted a top class entry with 45 athletes going to the starting line. Here we had another great event with the battle for the Cup only decided over the last kilometre. Right after the start a group of five athletes dictated the pace and they were, the winner Kevin Moore of Dundrum along with the Clonmel brothers, Kevin and William Maunsell as well as the Ballynonty duo of David Shelly and Danny Smith. Over the four lap course there was many a tussle throughout the field none more so that at the front as the pace was strong. Then going out on the 3rd lap there were only two athletes setting the pace, Kevin Moore and Kevin Maunsell with David Shelley and William Maunsell battling for the Bronze medal in close attendance. The two Kevins were still locked together as they went out on the last lap, matching stride for stride. Going down the far side of the course both athletes were still full of running, then as they turned for home Kevin Maunsell kicked for home only to be caught by Kevin Moore as they approached the long run into the finish and here Kevin Moore pushed on with one last surge that saw he win a great race and crowned worthy Champion with Kevin Maunsell winning the Silver medal, two great performances. Then we had David Shelly proving the stronger over the closing stages to win the Bronze medal and reverse the County Novice results with William Maunsell of Clonmel who was 4th. 5th athlete was Danny Smith of Ballynonty with William O Dwyer of Dundrum 6th. In the Cup competition it was going to be very close as Dundrum, Clonmel and Ballynonty now had two athletes home each with four athletes to score on each team. So all eyes were on the many tussles been fought among the athletes throughout the race, to see who would win the Cup. For the record 7th was Patrick Roche Carrick on Suir, 8th Shane Mullaney of Thurles Crokes, 9th Kenny Curran Ballynonty and 10th Ross Alexander of Coolquill. With James Ryan 11th and Ruaidhri Devitt 16th Dundrum had two points to spare over

Clonmel to win the Cup while Ballynonty were another point adrift in 3rd place, so 3 points separated the top 3 clubs, very close and a very competitive team competition, one of the closest ever at this level. This was Dundrum's 3rd in a row success and the one they will cherish the most as they had to pull out all the stops. The Silver medals were won by the Clonmel team of Kevin, William, Paudie O Keeffe 14th and Gerard O Loughlin 17th on 37 points. The Ballynonty team that won the Bronze medals on 38 points included David, Danny, Kenny and Owen Fanning 21st. For the record Coolquill were 5th on 70 points, 5th Dundrum B 93 points, 6th Clonmel B 96 points and 7th Moyne 139 points. The County Vice Chairman Tadhg Vaughan at the Presentation of the awards thanked all the Clubs for getting so many athletes to compete.

County Under 23 and Masters Cross Country titles

These Championships are down for decision this Sunday in the Thurles Crokes complex opposite Tipperary Institute on the Nenagh Road at approx 1.30pm. The Masters race is for the following age categories: Ladies over 35, over 40, over 45, over 50 and over 55 with medals awarded to the 1st 3 individual in each category as well as medals for the top 3 teams in the over 35 and in the over 45 with three athletes to count on each team. The Men's categories are over 35, over 40, over 45, over 50, over 55, over 60, over 65 with medals awarded to the 1st 3 individual in each category as well as medals for the 1st 3 teams over 40 (four to score) and over 50 with 3 to score. The Ladies race will be 3K while the Men's race is 7K. So a lady over 40 can compete in her over 40 category while also a member of the over 35 Club team. Likewise a man over 45 can compete in his own age group, over 45, while also counting on the Club's over 40 team, The Thurles Crokes course is relatively flat, so all Clubs are encouraged to get as many of their athletes as possible that are eligible, to compete. In the Ladies race athletes like Angela McCann of Clonmel, Martina Ryan of Thurles Crokes, Clare Kelly of Templemore and Martina O Dwyer of Carrick on Suir will feature while we could have a few new over 35 athletes emerging from the wings.

In the Men's race competition will once again be very keen among all the categories with a number of dark horse emerging in the over 35 category. In the past both these Master races are all very well supported and competition will be as good as ever and with the Sport enjoying a great upsurge at the moment it would be great to see every Club represented in these races on Sunday next.

In the under 23 categories in both the Ladies and Men's hopefully Clubs will get their eligible athletes out to compete as the number of eligible athletes in both categories are low but it is important to keep these Championships alive and so the County Board are asking all Clubs to support these two under 23 Championship events. Here athletes must be over 20 and under 23 on the 31st of December 2012 while the distances are: Ladies 3k and Men's 6k with three athletes to score on each team.