

# BALLYSHANNON '10' MILE ROAD RACE, 1981

Sunday, 11 October 1981

By Ollie Thomas  
Archive: Pat McManus  
Archive: Oliver Thomas (Snr)

*N.B. 1st and 2nd Neil Cusack and Gregg Hannon in the Ballyshannon '10' in 1981 were also 1st and 2nd a month later in the Dublin City Marathon.*

## **This piece entitled 'How the Ballyshannon '10' was won' appeared in the Donegal Democrat dated 16th October 1981**

Neil Cusack returned to Ballyshannon on Sunday last to defend his title and hope that he could get under 49 minutes, beat the field and win a trip to the forthcoming Boston Marathon next April. The conditions although a little blustery were a big improvement on the previous few days storms as the 220 competitors lined up in front of the Democrat Offices on the Donegal Road. The question was, could anyone get under 49 minutes in the windy conditions and would the Hannon brothers, Gregg a former British AAA marathon champion, Billy Gallagher a current Irish marathon representative, Danny McDaid back in training again, Noel McCarron winner of last Sunday's Half Marathon in Sligo or Paddy O'Donnell take the initiative from the Limerick man and break 49 minutes and could the recent rain return during the race. The large crowd did not have long to wait for the answer.

The opening mile into a headwind was like a massive charge. Cusack with Paddy O'Donnell were shoulder to shoulder at the one mile mark with the field back 30m and led by Gallagher, the Hannon, Sharkey, McCarron and McGrath. Along the quiet and sheltered link road towards Rossnowlagh, Cusack opened a 100m gap. Paddy O'Donnell dropped back and a battle developed for 2nd place between the Hannon brothers, McGrath and Sharkey. Billy Gallagher also dropped back and Danny McDaid after a slow opening two miles began to show. Cusack now had a 300m lead crossing the bridge before turning right and starting the grueling two mile climb up the Rock, past the GAA ground and out into the country. Cusack reached the highest part of the course and six miles in 28.26. He was well inside a 49 minute schedule and it looked like his year old record would fall. Greg Hannon climbed the hills well and had opened a 20m gap. Danny McDaid came up to Billy Gallagher's shoulder at 6 miles and Paddy O'Donnell and club mate Dermot McShane had solid climbs. The field at this stage was

stretched out over 2 miles. Many beginners were feeling the pressure and no doubt wondering about the Dublin City Marathon in three weeks time. A group which included blind runner Paddy Gallen from Armagh were only interested in finishing and seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Cusack on the down hill mile towards the Bundoran Road did not ease up. At 8 miles he clocked 38.08. He turned towards home with the breeze in his face once again and seemed to be easing up at the finish, with a trip to Boston under his belt, in a new record time of 48.03. As you will see from the results the times were excellent. Paddy O'Donnell was the first Donegal man home, closely followed by Danny McDaid who earlier this year announced his retirement from international athletics.

Certainly the very youthful Belfast Olympic Squad were impressive in retaining their team award.

One of the most remarkable performances of the afternoon and possibly the greatest ever seen in County Donegal was the performance of Paddy Gallen the blind athlete from Armagh. His time of 73.27 in the company of Pat O'Loughlin from Belleek makes all of us who are thinking about the aches and pains of the forthcoming Dublin City Marathon feel Ashamed. Pat incidentally hopes to compete in the Dublin City Marathon and if his performance on Sunday last is a guide, he will create a best time and performance in Irish athletics. He informed me that he trains on a closed off portion of road near his home every day with the assistance of a white cane. Anyone who feels they have an excuse for not participating in active sport should have a chat with this very jovial and active sportsman.

Finally a word for the organization. It was excellent, every mile was marked and timed. Thanks to the CB Radio Operators the crowd at the finish and around the course were kept informed of all developments. The prizes were a athletes dream, thanks to Eddie Barron and the very generous local

sponsorship. They included road shoes, track suits, sports bags, etc. Well done Ballyshannon Athletic Club.

## **Teams**

### **Eddie Barron Perpetual Trophy**

1. Belfast Olympic, 26 points
2. Letterkenny AC, 56 points
3. Killybegs, 83 points

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Clipping 34 seconds of the time he set last year, Irish olympic runner Neil Cusack won the 'Ballyshannon Ten Mile Road Race' in a time of 48 minutes and 3 seconds and in addition to the first prize of the 'Millstone Hotel Perpetual Trophy', won an expenses paid trip to Boston. The magnificent Eddie Barron Perpetual Team Trophy was won by Belfast Olympic with Letterkenny AC and Killybegs coming second and third respectfully.

To win the individual award Cusack had to beat a top class field of 220 runners of whom 163 finished the grueling ten mile course.

Afterwards there was a big crowd of competitors and friends in the Mercy Hall for the prize giving. The Ballyshannon event has earned a reputation in the past for the generous

scale of the prizes but the organizers excelled themselves this year due the the very generous donations and the very large stage held a dazzling array of goods of all descriptions, some of which were valued at over £50 and few of under £20.

Mr. E Britton acted as MC and thanked individually the sponsors and all who in any way helped to make the event such a tremendous success. The Ballyshannon '10' was now an important national athletics event and the organizers and competitors were all to be congratulated.

Club chairman Danny Carron also paid tribute to and thanked the competitors and all who helped the committee in any way mentioning especially the donor of the principal trophy and the expenses paid trip to Boston , Eddie Barron, in whose unavoidable absence his brother, Mr. Pat Barron, presented the trophy. He also thanked the other

principal sponsors, Belleek Pottery Ireland Ltd., Mr. Herman McNelis, of the Millstone Hotel, M. & B. Laundry, Mr. Louis Culkin, of the Ballyshannon Shoe Company Ltd. Peter John, Sligo, Magee of Donegal, John Keon, Donegal Sports Shop, AIB and Bank of Ireland, Ballyshannon and all the rest of the Ballyshannon traders who donated prizes. Also thanked was Mr. McGinley for the use of his premises at the finish, Eddie McGarrigle for supplying the milk, the Sisters of Mercy for placing the hall at their disposal and the Garda Siochana and the Army for the excellent job they did.

A novel feature of the event was that it was video taped by Mr. Gerry Gallagher, Abbey and while the placings were being worked out the video tapes were screened on two TV sets on the Stage to a commentary by Mr. Eamon Harvey, Donegal. Also thanked was Mr. John Mulligan for supplying the truck for recording the film.

Pos	Name	Club	Time
1	Neil Cusack	Limerick AC	48.03
2	Gregg Hannon	Belfast	49.16
3	Gerry Hannon	Belfast	49.35
4	F. Sharkey	Belfast Olympic	49.53
5	P. McGrath	Belfast Olympic	50.04
6	M. Copeland	Belfast Olympic	50.54
7	P. O'Donnell	Killybegs	51.04
8	D. McDaid	Letterkenny	51.36
9	B. Gallagher	Roscommon Harriers	51.56
10	W. McCracken	Newry Shamrocks	52.17
11	T. Green	Belfast Olympic	52.17
12	N. McCarron	Letterkenny	52.37
13	D. McShane	Killybegs	52.42
14	Peter Mulhern	Ballina	53.24
15	P. Connelly	Letterkenny	53.25
16	P. McGuinness	Sligo	53.29
17	R. Naylor	Ballina	53.40
18	K. McGonigle	NewTownards	54.28
19	M. Carney	North Sligo	54.52
20	P. Doherty	Finn Valley	54.58
21	H. Conway	Letterkenny	55.11
22	P. Mulholland	Sparta	55.15
23	G. Williamson (1st Vet)	(Vet)	55.19
24	P. Killeen	Roscommon Harriers	55.22
25	H. O'Halloran	Belfast Olympic	55.23

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Pos	Name	Club	Time
26	T. Harkin	Sparta	55.25
27	C. Linden	Belfast Olympic	55.28
28	P. Mitchell	Sparta	55.50
29	N. Farrell	Roscommon Harriers	55.52
30	R. Alcoran	Killybegs	55.58
31	B. Mitchell	Sparta	56.14
32	G. Goodman	Sparta	56.42
33	G. Melly	Killybegs	56.43
34	J. Kennedy (2nd Vet)	Belfast Olympic	56.46
35	J. Toye	Cranford	56.52
36	P. Murray	Ballina	57.02
37	R. Wilson	St John Bosco	57.02
38	E. Gallagher	Ballyshannon	57.31
39	M. Crampsie	Letterkenny	57.42
40	G. Lynch	Sparta	57.43
41	J. Haughey (3rd Vet)	St John Bosco	57.48
42	B. Sherlock	Monaghan	57.56
43	M. Reynolds	North Leitrim	57.57
44	W. Doherty	Sparta	58.17
45	N. McDaid	Letterkenny	58.20
46	T. Brannigan	Newry Shamrocks	58.28
47	K. Toner	Letterkenny	58.30
48	S. Logue	Sparta	58.40
49	J. Callaghan	Roscommon Harriers	58.50
50	M. McNulty	Belfast Olympic	58.54
51	J. Finnegan	Letterkenny	59.11
52	C. Fox	Letterkenny	59.13
53	M. Conlon	North Sligo	59.28
54	P. Brady	St John Bosco	59.40
55	J. Hynes	Finn Valley	59.53
56	G. McAnuff	Newry Shamrocks	60.03
57	K. Devine	Ballina	60.04
58	B. McGuinn	North Sligo	60.15
59	N. Martin	Finn Valley	60.17
60	P. Horley	Ballymote	60.18
61	M. Rooney	Belfast Olympic	60.29
62	O. Kelly	Belfast Olympic	60.35
63	S. O'Donnell	Killybegs	60.38
64	R. Lewis	Cavan AC	60.44
65	D. Gallagher	Ballyshannon	60.49
66	D. Coughlan	Ballyshannon	60.51
67	P. McManus	Ballyshannon	61.10
68	S. Keenaghan	Ballyshannon	61.17
69	B. Forrest	Sparta	61.27
70	JJ. Deveney	Ballina	61.29
71	J. Lally	Ballyshannon	61.38
72	D. Dunn	Sparta	61.52
73	D. Crampsie	Letterkenny	61.52
74	L. Coyle	Sparta	61.56
75	G. McGinty	Sparta	62.02
76	S. Cairns	Enniskillen	62.06

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Pos	Name	Club	Time
77	P. Ferguson	Manorhamilton	62.22
78	J. Rushe (Vet)	Finn Valley	62.26
79	M. Crawley	North Sligo	62.36
80	K. Barr	Sparta	62.50
81	R. Wilkinson	Letterkenny	62.51
82	G. McCabe	Ballyshannon	62.52
83	B. McArt	Letterkenny	62.56
84	J. Ward	Enniskillen	62.58
85	L. Burns	Enniskillen	63.06
86	G. Wynne	North Sligo	63.09
87	B. Ward	Letterkenny	63.17
88	P. Rushe	Tyrone	63.20
89	H. McGurn	Lifford	63.27
90	J. McCafferty	North Sligo	63.28
91	M. McGuire	Beechmount Joggers	63.30
92	J. McCallion	Belfast Olympic	63.41
93	PJ. Patton	Ballyshannon	63.47
94	I. Maguire	Belcoo	63.48
95	J. Friel	Killybegs	64.10
96	B. Rutherford (Vet)	Finn Valley	64.39
97	K. Burns	Enniskillen	64.48
98	R. Kelly (Vet)	Sparta	64.50
99	S. Lynch	Sparta	64.54
100	R. Nicholson	Calry, Sligo	64.55
101	M. Sandylands (Vet)	Finn Valley	64.57
102	S. McCracken (Vet)	Newry Shamrocks	65.10
103	T. McCoy	Sparta	65.11
104	I. Williamson	Newry Shamrocks	65.17
105	J. Toner	Letterkenny	65.19
106	P. Fox	Sparta	65.27
107	E. Drumm	Lifford	65.33
108	L. Fox	Newry Shamrocks	65.50
109	D. Haughey	Killybegs	65.54
110	H. Daly	Letterkenny	65.56
111	P. Harron	Cavan	66.03
112	S. Toner	Letterkenny	66.33
113	T. Harraghy	Ballyshannon	66.36
114	P. Hegarty	Finn Valley	66.57
115	P. Bradley	Sparta	66.59
116	T. Dunn	Cavan	67.12
117	R. McFadden	Sparta	67.17
118	D. Graham	Laghey	67.53
119	J. McHugh	Calry, Sligo	67.55
120	G. Lally	Ballyshannon	67.58
121	M. Connor (1st Lady)	Ballina	68.06
122	P. Keaney	Sparta	68.29
123	M. Devins	North Sligo	68.59
124	G. Harron	Laghey	69.03
125	S. Masterson	Enniskillen	69.29
126	G. Gillespie	Bundoran	70.15
127	D. Walker	Sparta	70.16

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Pos	Name	Club	Time
128	M. Cox	Belleek	70.40
129	J. Holbeach	Enniskillen	70.54
130	R. Harron	Laghey	71.05
131	F. McCormick	Cavan	71.29
132	I. Gallagher (2nd Lady)	Roscommon	72.22
133	D. Stewart	Sparta	72.32
134	N. Mullen (3rd Lady)	Sparta	72.39
135	J. Watters	Sligo	72.42
136	P. Barr	Sparta	72.44
137	A. Rooney	St John Bosco	72.53
138	J. O'Leary	Cavan	73.32
139	P. O'Loughlin (Vet)	Belleek	73.27
140	P. Gallen	Armagh	73.27
141	R. Carson	Tyrone	74.55
142	S. McLoone	Ballyshannon	75.10
143	M. Smith	Cavan	75.20
144	T. McCabe	Belfast	75.40
145	M. Elliott	Sparta	76.30
146	G. Taylor	Ballinamore	76.47
147	H. Stewart	Letterkenny	76.48
148	P. Morrison (Vet)	Sparta	77.44
149	E. Browne	Laghey	78.06
150	F. McGinley	Ballyshannon	78.11
151	J. McGrath	Newry Shamrocks	78.43
152	J. Carlton	Sparta	79.52
153	D. Sheerin	Sparta	80.46
154	J. Foley (Vet)	Finn Valley	81.09
155	A. Cairns (Lady)	Enniskillen	81.24
156	M. McCormick	Letterkenny	81.44
157	J. Crossan	Carrick-on-Shannon	82.34
158	C. Logue (Lady)	Sparta	86.32
159	T. Chada	Sparta	86.32

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## Ladies 3000M

Pos	Name	Club	Time
1	C. Coyle	Belfast Olympic	10.50
2	U. Barry	Belfast Olympic	11.02
3	Mary Clarke	Monaghan Phoenix	11.04
4	Philomena Gallagher	Ballyshannon	11.05
5	Madeline McEnerly	Monaghan Phoenix	11.11
6	Siobhan Gallagher	Ballyshannon	11.19
7	M. McGrath	Belfast Olympic	11.22
8	Sheila Reynolds	Ballyshannon	11.23
9	Siobhan Whelan	Monaghan Phoenix	11.35
10	C. Harkin	Belfast Olympic	11.44
11	M. McElroy	Enniskillen	11.47
12	S. Burns	Enniskillen	11.50
13	U. McKee	Belfast Olympic	11.59
14	L. Lamb	Monaghan Phoenix	12.12
15	A. Ward	Belfast Olympic	12.27
16	F. McCafferty	Finn Valley	12.42
17	Sinead Gallagher	Ballyshannon	13.47
18			

## Youths U17 3000M

Pos	Name	Club	Time
1	P. Ritchie	Ballyshannon	9.03
2	E. Fitzpatrick	Longford	9.08
3	I. Stewart	Silverwood	9.18
4	C. Rogan	Belfast Olympic	9.20
5	P. McNulty	Finn Valley	9.35
6	T. McCarthy	Belfast Olympic	9.36
7	P. Gill	Belfast Olympic	9.47
8	J Carney	Belfast Olympic	9.55
9	C. Devlin	Belfast Olympic	9.58
10	C. Cavanagh	Belfast Olympic	9.59
11	R. Rushe	Finn Valley	10.01
12	M. Crawley	Newry Shamrocks	10.03
13	P. McGee	Sparta	10.04
14	M. Rushe	Cookstown	10.12
15	C. Dunne	Belfast Olympic	10.14
16	G. Copeland	Belfast Olympic	10.24
17	S. Quigg	Sparta	10.27
18	P. Kerrigan	Enniskillen	10.28
19	W. Collins	Newry Shamrocks	10.29
20	C. Parland	Newry Shamrocks	10.36
21	S. Bradly	Sparta	10.47
22	D. Browne	Sparta	10.48
23	F. Gardiner	Ballyshannon	10.49
24	I. Clarke	Newry Shamrocks	11.12
25	M. McEcholine	Sparta	12.00
26	M. Gallagher	Ballyshannon	12.20