

Tir Chonaill AC Summer Roundup

As Tir Chonaill A.C. members embark on a new season, with its many challenges, it's fitting that we take a quick look back at a most successful, busy and eventful summer of activities, coaching, organising and competition. At all levels there have been so many positive aspects to recall and highlight.

Road Success

Early in the summer the club successfully hosted two Donegal Road League races in Ballyshannon and Donegal Town. A sincere thanks to all who helped make these and the trio of club open Sunday morning races/walks safe and successful experiences for the hundreds that participated. Subsequently club members were successful in winning numerous category prizes, at a variety of Donegal league races throughout the county. The final race of the Donegal League takes place on Sunday 16th September at 11.15 in Convoy. A large number of club members will travel to support and no doubt will be hopeful of returning with podium/category finishes.

Summary

- Large numbers of club athletes compete in Donegal Road league races
- Success for T.C athletes at 8th Danny McDaid 15k – 21 compete
- Frank Duffy 10mile in the Phoenix Park –congrats to Paul McDevitt, 71mins 43ses; Canice Nicholls 73mins 43secs; Jane McDevitt 75mins 44secs and Sean Cassidy, 77mins 36secs
- Northern Ireland Ironman Triathlon –well done Tony Cummins on an outstanding individual performance and to the relay team of Fred Ormston, Swin, Aidan Ferguson, Cycle and Noel Hoey, Run
- Longford Half Marathon – well done Linda Ward, 3rd Lady and Philomena Gallagher on two fine performances
- Good to have Paddy Donoghue home from his summer sojourn in France. It's only a rumour that he was in an 'altitude training centre' getting in some secret training
- Training groups up and running again – Paddy Donoghue's training group report 25/30 training at the moment. Kevin Mc Glynn's, Donegal Town group will resurrect within the next week. Currently Kevin is taking a well-deserved holiday in the USA. ---not sure what type of training he is doing
- Good luck to all club athletes during the next week as they contest the Derry Half Marathon, Garrison 8k,the Glens 10k,Donegal 5k final and numerous other events across the North West

Track

Senior

On the track Tir Chonaill athletes also made the headlines throughout the summer. Mary Mc Loone continues to dominate at National Senior level. At the National Seniors, on the week prior to the start of the Olympics she Triple jumped 12.69m for an impressive victory and Long Jumped 6.17m for silver. Later she led the clubs senior women's team in two preliminary rounds of the National League at Antrim and Santry. This group finished 11th overall, narrowly missed out on a top 8 and final position, and retained their Premier League status. Well done to this group which included Mary Mc Loone, Geraldine Stewart, Louise Harvey, Karen Crossan, Brenda Morris, Linda Ward, Philomena Gallagher, Patricia Boyle, Hannah Campbell and Claire Brady.

Junior and International

At the National Junior c/ships Karl Griffin and Christopher Doherty had impressive performances. Karl, moving down a distance to the 400m, dipped under 50secs in the semi-final and in the decider, with a time of 49.52secs, was a popular winner of the very demanding 400m. It was a successful whirlwind of a summer for Karl –running two U20 World Junior qualifying standards and competing successfully in the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona in the World Junior c/ships. 17 year old Karl is eligible for the 2013 European and 2014 World Junior c/ships. Christopher Doherty, when the Leaving Cert results were published recently scored an amazing 585pts. He travelled to the National Juniors and cleared 3.50m for a silver medal winning position proving that it is possible and advisable to partner sport and academics/study.

On the International stage, in addition to Karl Griffin's exploits, two 15 year old club members had a string of outstanding performances. Following on from the success of the Abbey Voc. Schools individual and team performances at the Irish schools c/ships in early June a number were selected on the Ulster team for the schools Inter Pro in Santry. As a result of impressive victories Kelly Mc Grory and Kate McGowan gained selection on the Irish U17 team v Scotland, Wales and England. Ashford, in Kent, was the venue and a number of Donegal and Irish flags could be seen in the crowd. Both girls battled and took 3rd place finishes in their respective events – Kate 80m Hurdles and Kelly –300m Hurdles. In August Kate, as part of the Irish team, smashed the U16 Celtic record when winning the 80m Hurdles. Two weeks ago, in Bedford, at the British U17 c/ships Kelly and Kate again rose to the occasion and versus the best from these islands recorded two second place finishes and outstanding PB times. Kelly on day one qualified in 2nd place in heat three for the following days decider. Her heat time of 45.12secs left her in 4th overall qualifying position. In the final, on a day when the temperatures reached the early 30's and humidity made it most uncomfortable, Kelly drawn in Lane 4, blasted from the blocks and led over the opening two sets of barriers. As she entered the home straight, with two sets of obstacles to negotiate, less than one metre

separated four athletes –all fighting for 2nd position. Holding her rhythm Kelly seemed to find another gear and gradually moved away from the quartet and closed down on the leader. The finish line appeared too soon – result Richards, Epsom and Newell, 41.84secs; 2nd McGrory, Tir Chonaill, 42.91secs; 3rd Rogers, Birchfield, 43.22secs.

Kate McGowan, drawn in Heat 2, qualified for the 80m Hurdles final in 2nd place-- time 11.66secs. She was ranked 3rd fastest entering the final with .03 secs separating 2nd and 5th places. In the final, Kate got the perfect start, and at Hurdle 4 of 8 was contesting for a top three placing. At the finish, Irving from Croydon, time 11.36secs, was an impressive winner followed by Kate in a new PB time of 11.45secs and Cooke of Haringey 3rd – 11.54secs

Irish Juvenile Championships

In Tullamore, on two weekends in mid and late July the club was represented by a large group of athletes in the All Ireland individual and relay finals. Congrats and well done to the following and their coaches. Individually they placed 5 x Gold, 4 x silver , 1 x 4th , 3 x 5th, 1 x 7th and 2 x 9th place finishes plus 2 x silver relay team podium positions.

Orla Coughlan, U13G Long Jump 9th 4.24m; Clara Herron,U15G Shot,2nd 11.73m; Chloe Masterson, U15G Hammer, 5th, 27m; Kate McGowan, 1st U16 80mH –11.86secs, 1st Long Jump –5.59m, 6th 100m 12.89secs;Ruth Gillespie, G80m H –8th U16 80m H–14.31secs; Katie Hoad, 2nd U16 Pole Vault–1.70m; Kelly McGrory, 2nd U17 100m –12.48secs, 2nd 100m H 15.54secs, 2nd 200m –25.47secs; Hannah Campbell, 1st u17 Pole Vault – 2.50m; Caolan O’Callaghan, U16 High Jump 5th –1.65m; Mark McGuinness, 2nd U18 3,000m–9mins 8.68secs, 7th ,1,500m –4mins 12.72secs; Sarah Timoney, 4th U16 Girls 2k walk –11mins34.68secs; Emma Brady, 1st U17 Triple Jump –10.66m;Eva McMullan, U16 200m Heat 27.61secs –9th overall;

The girls U16 and Under 17 relay teams won silver medals. The former squad of Ruth Gillespie, Eva McMullan, Kate McGowan, Niamh McGrory and Chloe Masterson with a time of 51.97secs were 2nd to St Laurence O’Tooles from Carlow –50.46secs and Leevale, Cork 3rd 51.96secs. Yes 2nd and 3rd had the same time with the 4th team Tralee on 51.97secs. Electronics decided on the placings. The U17 squad were involved in an equally exciting and nail biting final. Ruth Gillespie, Kelly McGrory, Emma Brady, Eva McMullan and Kate McGowan with an excellent 49.88secs finishing time, were out manoeuvred by Galway city Harriers who won in 49.82secs. The Galway City Harriers group of sprinters and relay runners are coached by former Abbey Voc, student/athlete and Drimarone woman Pauline Dunleavy/Harington

Summer Camp

The clubs annual summer camp, attracted 110 young athletes. An enjoyable and varied week of activities was enjoyed by all thanks to the planning and work of over thirty coaches, teachers and leaders. A sincere thank you to all who made the camp a success and to the Principal of the AVS for putting the schools extensive sports facilities at the clubs disposal

Membership

A recent document on registered membership received from Athletics Ireland makes interesting and positive reading.

Nationally, the overall athletics club membership as on 31st August 2012 is 36,128. Membership on 31st August 2011 was 31,416. At the end of 2007 the national membership was less than 20,000.

Locally within the county of Donegal the current registered club membership is as follows- Cranford, 94; Finn Valley, 261; Innishowen, 207; Killybegs, 21; Letterkenny, 251; Lifford, 152; Milford, 23; Rosses, 139; Sliabh Liag, 69 and Tir Chonaill, 282.

The trend in the county shows a 22% increase between August 2011 and August 2012. This welcome increase challenges the clubs to have more varied and professional programmes, to find more administrators, officials and coaches and to move forward as nationally it is forecast that Athletics Ireland will have close to 50k membership at the end of 2013