



2017 Day 3 & 4 Leinster indoor Championships

Date: 26th February 2017

Days 3 & 4 of the 2017 Leinster indoor championships took place on Saturday and Sunday last at the fantastic new National indoor arena at the National sports campus in Abbotstown. In the relays representing Dundalk St Gerards AC were the girls U12 squad of Nicola McElroy, Mia Keely, Ciara Cunningham, Grainne Moran & Enya Silkena, the U13 girls team of Hannah & Rebekah Cunningham, Emma Whately & Leah Miele, also the U15 girls team of Patricia Jumbo-Gula, Ellen McBride, Ava O'Hanlon, Kerrie Hazzard and Ellen Murphy and lastly the boys U16 squad of George Maas, Jamie Wynne, Conall Quinn, Joe Lennon & Conor Toal. Also in action was Kate O'Connor in the U18 girl's high jump and shot putt and Patience Jumbo-Gula in the junior women's 60m.

With the odd ages going on the first half of the card first into action were the U13 girls. On their first outing together at this level the girls acquitted themselves well taking third place in their heat and Leah, Hannah, Rebekah & Emma gaining experience along the way. Next into action were the girls U15 team with Ava O'Hanlon showing the value of a full squad stepping in for the unwell Ellen Murphy. The girls showed great pace leading at halfway and eventually taking another third place finish in their heat with Patricia showing signs she is coming back into form, Ellen continuing her good form of late and Ava & Kerrie running strongly.

The U12 girls set the ball rolling in the second half of the card. With 28 teams taking part there were 5 heats to decide who made the last 6 for the final. Drawn in heat 1 the squad of Mia, Nicola, Ciara Grainne & Enya put themselves right in contention for honours with a sparkling performance storming home first and qualifying as the second fastest team. In the decider one again the girls were flying and despite not being as slick with the changeovers they finished a gallant second place. Unfortunately the drama wasn't over and with the judges deeming the girls had taken the 'break' on the third leg early they were disqualified and learned a harsh lesson. Nonetheless they can take solace from the fact that they were the second fastest team on the day despite their misfortune.

The boys U16 team of George, Jamie, Conall, Joe & Conor also had their first outing at this level. In a very strong heat they finished 3rd qualifying for the final as the third faster team overall. With Joe carrying an injury and unable to compete in the decider once again the importance of having subs was evidenced with Conor deputising for the final. Once again the boys performed brilliantly and were right in contention all the way in a very exciting 3 way battle for the bronze, eventually finishing in 5th after a brilliant, brave and battling effort. The experience will no doubt benefit the boys and demonstrate to them that they can compete at this level.

Earlier in the day Kate O'Connor got her season underway in the U18 girl's high jump and shot putt. In the high jump she only took on jump but her clearance was sufficient to earn her a bronze medal. Next up was the shot where the field included the reigning all Ireland champion. From the outset Kate showed she had brought her 'A' game with a 13.21m opener followed by an excellent series of throws breaking the championship record twice along the way and finishing the competition with a best of 13.71m over 1m ahead of her nearest competitor. This was a brilliant opener and considering that Kate is a multi-events athlete it makes the performance even more impressive.

On Sunday Patience Jumbo-Gula who is still 15 years made her seasonal debut in the Leinster junior women's championships in the 60m. Brushing off the cobwebs she showed she will continue to be a force to be reckoned with with a solid run for 3rd in her heat to qualify for the final against many more experienced and older girls. In the final once again she performed with great credit to finish just off a medal and displaying all the potential that has led to her selection as part of the Irish national junior relay squad.

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