



2014 Leinster Championships and Community Games

Date: 7th June 2014

It was a case of quality over quantity for Dundalk St Gerard's AC at the Leinster championships in Tullamore on Saturday last June 7th. Representing the club were Ellen Murphy, Patricia Jumbo-Gula, Maria Smith, Ruari O'Connor and George Maas . While they might have been short on numbers the quintet proved to be a crack squad with an impressive strike rate on the day with each and every one of them rising to the occasion.

First into action were Ruari & George in the boys U13 javelin. Despite their early start both boys started brightly throwing well into the slight headwind. The competition was strong as is usual at this level, but recently crowned Louth champ Ruari took the rise in class in his stride with an excellent series of throws to take gold with a best of 25.95m taking the bragging rights away from his much decorated sister in the O'Connor household. George performed well too and was close to making the final eight for the throw off. Both boys went on to compete in the shot putt also and once again gave good displays in the competition.

Ellen Murphy & Patricia Jumbo-Gula took part in the girls U12 category. First up was Ellen in the shot putt where she performed well to make the final eight for the throw off despite being slightly short of her PB. A fifth place finish was her final placing. Following that she had to dash across to the long jump competition which was getting underway. With little time to prepare she set about the task following on from her recent PB in the Louth championships. With her first jump she set a new PB of 3.89m and followed that up with a solid series of jumps and another PB with a great leap of 4.08m to just miss out on a medal in fourth place in a large field of athletes, however this blow was softened by the fact that she had achieved qualification for the All Irelands in July. Having completed her sixth jump it was another race to the high jump competition to join her club mate Patricia who had shown her prowess in this event with a victory at the county championships in May. Ellen cleared the first few heights with little difficulty but bowed out below her PB unsurprisingly given her busy day. Patricia built on her recent good form and leapt to a new PB of 1.25m to whittle down the field and leave just two competitors in the mix. At this point Lady Luck turned against her with another event overlap meaning she had to race to the 60m to take part in her heat where after a customary slow start she finished well to take 2nd and qualify for the final. No sooner had she crossed the line, Patricia had to head straight back to the high jump to attempt 1.28m. Unfortunately the energy utilised in the sprint might well have taken some of the bounce out of her legs and she failed to clear the height, but, nonetheless took a marvellous silver medal. In the 60m final she once again ran well without getting into the medals.

The speedy Maria Smith made her debut at provincial level having showed strong form so far this season. In her 80m heat she stormed to an excellent win to qualify for the final. In the decider despite her lack of experience she once again showed her class to take a fantastic bronze medal in a quality race. For someone with Maria's limited race experience this was an amazing performance and clearly indicates that the high opinion the clubs coaches have of her were right on the money. In the long jump competition Maria once again gave a good account of herself in another hot contest.

Last up after a long days competition were the inter-county relays. Patricia Jumbo-Gula and Maria Smith were the backbone of the girls U13 Louth squad where they teamed up with Boyne AC's Tara Meier and Glenmore AC's Erica Quinn. The team looked strong on paper but as they say the proof of the pudding is in the eating. On this front the girls didn't disappoint serving up a master-class to lead the Wee County to victory and top off a great day of top class performances.

On Sunday some of the clubs athletes represented the St Joseph's Dundalk area in the finals of the Louth Community Games in Drogheda. Patience Jumbo-Gula was once again brilliant in winning the U14 girls 100m with Maria Smith continuing her fantastic weekend with a fine second place finish. Ruari O'Connor was on top of his game again with another victory in the U14 boys javelin. Caitlin Mulholland had things all her own way in the U16 girls 7k marathon. Meabh O'Connor was the second one in the family to book her place at the national finals in Athlone with a great victory in the U8 girls 60m. Ciara Cunningham showed her super speed once again to win the U9 girls 80m. Emma Coleman ran her usual brave race in the U12 girls 800m. Patricia Jumbo-Gula finished off a hugely successful weekend in style taking the U12 girls 100m to make it a family sprint double. Kate Smyth representing Blackrock/Haggardstown took 3rd in the U16 girls 1500m. In the U12 girls relay Patricia & Emma were part of the squad along with Blackrock AC's Aoibhín McMahon, Sarah Clarke and Hannah Reilly who took gold. Maria Smith and Patience Jumbo-Gula teamed up with Shauna McMahon and Kelly Breen of Blackrock AC to win the U14 girls relay.

Well done to all our brilliant young athletes on a busy weekend of competition. Next on the list are the combined events Leinster championship on Saturday next at the Lourdes stadium in Drogheda.

Training takes place each Tuesday & Thursday at Young Irelands GFC, Hoey's lane at 6.30pm. Training continues every Tuesday & Thursday at Young Irelands pitch from 6.30 to 8PM. New members welcome.

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