



2014 Louth Cross Country Championships Day 2

Date: 12th October 2014

The combination of radiant sunshine and the excellent course made for a great sporting occasion at Day 2 of the Louth cross country championships at DKIT sports fields on Sunday last 12th October. With the weather & conditions belying the time of year, a bigger than usual contingent of cross country runners alongside their families and loyal supporters lined up for Dundalk St Gerard's AC. Representing the club were Ellie & Robyn Gorham, Ciara Cunningham, Hely Rasandratana, Ethan Mullen, Hayden & Caitlin Mulholland, Rebekah & Hannah Cunningham, Sarah Hearty, Emily Molloy, Emma Hearty, Maeve Woods, Maria Smyth, Laura-Jane Hearty, James McCarron, Shane Callan & Kate Smyth.

In the U9 girls 600m Ciara Cunningham & Robyn Gorham were in action. From the off Ciara used her sprint speed to get right into contention with Robyn getting caught up in some traffic problems in a big field. Despite her great natural sprint pace Ciara also showed stamina & ran strongly to the finish to medal in 4th place on a very satisfactory cross country debut, with Robyn running on strongly just out of the medals. The boy's crew of Hely Rasandratana, Ethan Mullen & Hayden Mulholland made very encouraging debuts in the winter game. Hely showed great courage & determination put in his customary brilliant fighting finish to lead the boy's home, just outside the medals with Ethan & Hayden chasing him home running encouraging races too.

The girls U-11's fielded a very young team with only Ellie Gorham in her correct age group. Alongside her were debutante Sarah Hearty & twins Hannah & Rebekah Cunningham. The course proved a challenging one with plenty of undulations over the 1500m distance. Ellie started brightly getting herself into a prominent position early on with the younger trio of Sarah, Rebekah & Hannah tentatively making ground up after getting taken off their feet with the strong early pace. Slowly but surely they began to settle and progress through the field. On the long uphill climb to the finish Sarah began picking off and passing athletes all the way to the line to finish strongly to lead the quartet home & crown an impressive debut, followed home by the gallant Ellie, Rebekah & Hannah who unfortunately suffered a stitch which hampered her efforts.

The U13 girls had a 2500m course to deal with in their encounter. Emily Molloy continued to show improved form to run an excellent race surprising herself but not her coaches and lead the girls home with a strong finishing 6th place, following her home was the ever improving Emma Hearty who got better and better as the race went on and finished powerfully looking like she could have gone round again, Laura Jane Hearty showed her usual fighting spirit to finish the grueling test with another fine run showing she is learning all the time about how to pace herself. Maeve Woods who was making her competitive debut was right up with the leaders when an injury struck, although disappointed wisely she made the right

decision to stop and can take confidence from the fact that she was in the process of running a fine race against much more experienced girls to this point. Likewise the super sprinter Maria Smith had a baptism of fire in the winter game, with a stitch forcing her withdrawal from the race.

James McCarron picked up a strain in the warm up for the U15 boys 3500m race where he was joined on the line by debutante Shane Callan. Unfortunately for James he couldn't shake the injury off and was forced to retire. Shane ran a brave race over a distance that is way beyond his optimum trip, but will stand him in good stead for next year's track season where he will be able to put his natural speed to good use. In the girls U15 encounter Caitlin Mulholland ran her usual consistent race, running right up with the leaders until the final lap where the strong pace began to tell. Bravely she battled all the way to the finish to take a gallant 4th place in a strong race.

Kate Smyth took on the 4k distance for the girls U17 race which was run alongside the u19 girls & women's intermediate events. Building on her fine performance in Drogheda the previous week she showed good improvement to put up another accomplished performance & take an excellent silver medal in her category and finish well up in the large field of athletes.

Next week sees the annual Glenmore AC cross country event at Bush.

Training every Thursday evenings in De La Salle Hall, Mill Road from 6.30pm.

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