



UP AND RUNNING

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He who organises, wins . . .

Race organiser Barry Minnock (inset) pulled off a rare feat by sweeping to victory in last Sunday's Athlone 3/4 Marathon (19.6 miles).

Some 670 participants toed the line at the Co Westmeath venue for the third edition of this event, which serves as ideal preparation for the Dublin Marathon later this month.

On a fine day on undulating country roads, the race finished in the grounds of Glasson Hotel and Golf Club, overlooking Killenure Bay.

IT consultant Minnock pulled clear of Gary O'Hanlon (Clonliffe Harriers) after 15 miles to triumph in 1:47.07. O'Hanlon clocked 1:47.56; Paul Duffy (Sportsworld) was third in 1:50.54.

Afterwards, the Rathfarnham WSAF runner explained how it was only at the 11th hour that he decided to join the masses in the race.

"I am one of the race organisers. It's bad to be running my own race, but we had a huge amount of help today, so I got a chance to run it and am delighted," said the 37-year-old, who only picked up the sport seven years ago.

"Literally, at 10.30am, half an hour before the start, I decided to run. We had to make sure that everything was perfect and I had a chat with Paul Mahon, the other organiser. I had the shorts on just in case.

"But I was tired. I only got five hours sleep. I was out on the course at 5.30am putting out the markers. I'm sure I'll sleep tonight."

Shortly after crossing the line, he was accosted by Mahon, who quipped: "No warm-down — you're supposed to be working!"

Nobly, however, the Tullamore, Co Offaly, native decided not to accept the winner's prize.

"Keith Duffy is running for Irish Autism Action. I will just give the €300 prize money to his charity," he said. The Boyzone star finished in 2:56.

Dundalk, Co Louth, accountant Mary Laverty (North East Runners) took the ladies' honours in 2:14.39, while Dubliner Will Byrne (39) crossed the finish line in 2:09.54 carrying his two-year-old daughter, Sophie.

EOGHAN YOUNG-MURPHY



Will Byrne reaches the finish line with his daughter, Sophie, at the Athlone 3/4 Marathon.

HILARY JENKINSON

