



GAMES: Nick Hammond, left, and Frank Moggan, both from Stowmarket, Suffolk, England



Ger Kirwan, Dublin, during the closing stages



Connie McGuigan, left, and John McCann from Tyrone



Barry Casserly, Blackrock, Dublin,



Barry Shanks, Craigavon, Co. Arma

Pollock's top-10 finish just what doctor ordered



ANNA FOLEY

ld chestnut about buses was reprised around the Dublin ion finish-line yesterday Paul Pollock and Maria bridge ran lifetime bests to Irish titles.

earth of Irish men able to break barrier recently has been d among the nation's former ass standard-bearers.

why Sean Connolly's 2:18.52 last en winning the Irish title - run in conjunction with Dublin yns - was regarded as such a ie.

echoing that old line about ree Irish sub-2:20s came along me time yesterday, led by flying octor Pollock (26), of Annadale a superb 2:16.30 debut.

r behind him was Sean Hehir another super first-time run of followed by his Rathfarnham e Barry Minnock in 2:18.45.

DUBLIN MARATHON RESULTS

INTERNATIONAL MEN
1G Ndungu (Ken) 2:11.09
2R Kipchumba (Ken) 2:11.26
3A Bedada (Eth) 2:11.31
4U Negewo (Eth) 2:13.15
5C Kibiwot (Ken) 2:13.31
6D Tsega (Eth) 2:13.34

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN
1M Makunzi (Ken) 2:30.46
2F Chemai (Ken) 2:31.10
3N Puchkova (Rus) 2:31.42
4A Bekera Dido (Eth) 2:33.29
5M Kovaleva (Rus) 2:34.52
6J Johannes (Nam) 2:35.00

IRISH MEN
1P Pollock 2:16.30
2S Hehir 2:17.35
3B Minnock 2:18.45
4S Ciobanu 2:20.44
5G O'Hanlon 2:26.39
6P Duffy 2:29.48

IRISH WOMEN
1M McCambridge 2:35.28
2B Sanchez 2:42.10
3P Curley 2:45.49
4A Kealy 2:49.43
5A Malone 2:50.11
6A Curley 2:54.08

WHEELCHAIR
1L Jones 2:03.29
2R Powell 2:10.50
3P Hannan 2:13.06

had the temerity to throw the gauntlet down to all the visiting Africans.

He even got a 100m jump on them at the nine-mile mark to lead the field through Chapelizod and Inchicore.

That looked a tad rash for any domestic runner, never mind a debutant, but Pollock stuck firmly with the elite visitors until after half-way and had no regrets after finishing ninth overall in the fastest time by an Irishman in Dublin

since Gerry Healy's 2:15.17 in 1999.

"I don't think I went too fast. I'd always planned to go for about 5.05-minute miles but everyone was sitting at 5.10 pace, so I thought I might as well take it on and see how long I could hold out for before I blew up," revealed the doctor, who is currently specialising in respiratory medicine at Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital.

"The pain didn't kick in until 20 miles but I think sub-2:17 is the World Championship qualifying time, so I was happy with that."

Pollock trained full-time last year in an unsuccessful bid to qualify for the Olympics but, coached by Andy Hobdell (whose charges include top Briton Andy Baddeley), he showed serious marathon potential yesterday. He is next targeting the European Cross-Countries.

THRILLED

Second-placed Hehir, from Kilkishen, near Tulla, in Clare, was equally thrilled.

A primary teacher in the Oblates in Inchicore, some of his students lined the course to cheer him on - and sport is certainly in his genes.

His mum Cushla Murphy-Hehir is a former Irish schools athletics champion and senior international. His dad Sean won NHL medals with the Clare hurlers, his brother Diarmuid is a recent Clare U-21 player and his sister Cushla goaled for Ireland in last weekend's shinty internationals.

"Paul's time was epic and for my first one, I'm absolutely delighted," Hehir said. "I went through half-way in 68 minutes, feeling absolutely fantastic, but from the 15-mile mark I didn't even think I'd make it to the finish line. The legs started to buckle and I had to stop twice to stretch them out."

"People talk about New York and London but the atmosphere out there was second to none," he added.

He was particularly delighted as he considered pulling out 16 weeks ago after a disrupted summer, but his coach Dick Hooper - the inaugural Dublin winner - persuaded him to stick with it.



The first three Irishmen home, from left, 2nd placed, Sean Hehir, 1st placed Paul Pollock, Co. Down and 3rd placed Barry Minnock, Co. Offaly at the presentation ceremony in Merrion Square

Hehir finished 13th overall, and in 14th place was Tullamore man Minnock, whose 2:18.45 was almost a minute slower than when he was sixth in Hannover last year.

For McCambridge, overlooked by the Olympic selectors last summer, there was not only the satisfaction of winning her second Irish marathon title, but her 2:35.28 knocked one second off her PB from Paris four years ago.

"That's the great thing about being a runner, there's always another race," she said. "This wasn't the Olympics but I'm still delighted."

McCambridge kept with the elite women until the 10km mark (in 37:14), but when they upped the pace from 5:50-minute miles to 5:30s, she faded back but still finished seventh overall.

Two places behind her and second in the Irish championships was Raheny's French-born Barbara Sanchez (2:42.10) and another place adrift in third was Olympian Pauline Curley (2:45.49).



Geoffrey Ndungu, Kenya, crosses the line to win the Elite Men's race



Gary Condren, from Saggart, Co. Dublin, and a soldier at Cathal Brugha Barracks



Adrian Kelly, from Kilcock, Co. Kildare, does the 'Mobot' during the race