

Ginty blazes trail in new cross-country

Getting out of bed early at the weekend is never easy. On a frosty January morning it is even more difficult. However, that's what over 100 female athletes did for Sportsworld's first ever Meet and Train 2-mile Cross-Country Race in Bushy Park, Dublin, on Sunday.

For Paddy Lynch, chairman of Sportsworld, it was a dream come true. "This means everything to me," said Paddy. "It has taken two years to bring it to life and it is great to host a cross-country race in a place we know so well."

Club coach and founder Emily Dowling was also delighted. "It's great to see so many women running. We have this beautiful park and what better way to experience it than to run a cross-country race," she said.

Sue Lynch, from Donore Harriers, was helping to run the show before the race as well as taking part.

"It's a super course, fast, flat with a few little tricky bits," she said. "It's always a great day when we have a new course."

Maura Ginty of Sportsworld AC was a clear winner, finishing in 12.34 ahead of Bernadette Kiernan (Clonliffe Harriers) in 13.37 and Caroline Conway (Sportsworld), 13.38.

CONOR KENNY



The men take off at the Dublin Masters Cross-Country Championships in Raheny, Dublin, last Sunday. DAVID SOMERVILLE

Hehir targets Worlds after blitzing 10k

So much for easing down in the lead-up to a race: Clare native Seán Hehir broke the course record in the Tom Walsh Memorial 10k in Caherconlish, Co Limerick, last Sunday — even though he logged 110 miles in the preceding week.

The primary school teacher from Dublin's Inchicore led home a field of over 200 participants in the second running of this event, while a further 120 took part in a 5-mile walk.

Hehir (27) took the spoils in 30.37, a country kilometre clear of second-placed Rory Sexton in 33.57. David Ryan was third in 34.15.

Hehir is currently in the midst of heavy training in the lead-up to the Rotterdam Marathon in the Netherlands in April, which he hopes will lead to qualification for major championships.

"At the moment, I am only two weeks back from my Christmas break and I am back into full marathon training," said Hehir, who was second Irishman home in last October's Dublin Marathon, with a time of 2:17.35.

"It's a heavy training week; I have 110 miles in my legs this week. I didn't go into it fresh, by any means. I am training for the Rotterdam Marathon in 14 weeks' time.

"My dream would be to try and qualify for the World Championships in Moscow this August and the European Championships in Zurich the following summer.



Athletes, including Seán Hehir (centre, No 5), line up for the Tom Walsh Memorial 10k. IAN HORGAN

"The standard for the Worlds is 2.17. If I can better my time from Dublin, which is 2.17, that will be huge progress."

Hehir, coached by former Olympic marathon runner Dick Hooper, thoroughly enjoyed his race in Limerick, which was held in ideal weather conditions and on a predominantly flat course.

He was presented with his winner's prize by one of his idols.

"I got to meet a sporting legend today — Jim Hogan, the 1966 European marathon champion — and got my photo taken with him," said Hehir. "Having read his book, it was an honour to meet him."

Clonmel AC's Angela McCann was the ladies champion in 36.54; Dymphna Ryan was the runner-up in 37.33; Ann MacPhail, with 38.49, occupied the remaining place on the podium.

EOGHAN YOUNG-MURPHY

HOGAN WINS FERRYCARRIG 5

Tom Hogan of Sliabh Buidhe Rovers AC delivered a strong performance to win Sunday's Ferrycarrig 5-Mile Road Race in Wexford — an event organised by St Killian's Athletic Club. Hogan finished in 25.18 — 55 seconds clear of Andrew Connick of Waterford AC (26.13). Local favourite Niall Sheil of St Killian's AC finished a gallant third. Myles Gibbons, (SBR) was fourth in 27.01.

The women's race was won by Jackie Carthy (inset) in 29.43 from Sylvia Malone, (Waterford AC), 30.28. Ann Sullivan, (DMP) finished third in 30.46.

PHOTO: TOMÁS GREALLY

TRAYNOR WINS FOR RAHENY

Mick Traynor of Raheny Shamrock AC was first over the line in the men's race at Sunday's Dublin Masters Cross-Country Championships in St Anne's Park, Raheny. Traynor finished ahead of Davy Byrne of Tallaght AC and David Kirwan, (Raheny Shamrock AC).

Jean Wilson of Sportsworld AC won the women's event from Ann Curley, (Donore Harriers) and Dervilla Holmes, (Donore Harriers).

AXA 5 MILE ENTRIES FLOW IN

The entries continue to flow in at a rapid rate for the AXA Raheny 5-Mile Road Race that takes place on Sunday, January 27. "We are appealing to all intending entrants to register online now as we will not be taking any late entries on the day," AXA Raheny 5 race director Pat Hooper said.

This year's AXA Raheny 5 looks set to break the 3,000 mark for the first time in the event's 29-year history. The Raheny race has a big reputation for excellent organisation and post-race hospitality. The AXA Raheny 5 goodie bag is also legendary — always packed to the limit. The online entry is still open — visit www.rahenyshamrock.ie or call Pat Hooper on 01 08392222 or 086 8158052.

RUN KILDARE IS LAUNCHED

Olympic marathon runner Mark Kenneally, Kildare mayor Michael 'Spike' Nolan and Dr Eddie Murphy from the RTÉ TV show *Operation Transformation* were among the guests at last week's launch of the annual Run Kildare 10k, half-marathon and full marathon in the Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge.

This year's Run Kildare promotion, which takes place on Sunday, May 12 is expected to attract an overall entry of 5,000.

"Our mission is to provide professional and memorable running events for both the elite and recreational runners," Run Kildare race director Jo Cawley said. "We also strive to build continuous support for our three chosen charities — The Marie Keating Foundation, Special Olympics and St Vincent De Paul."

Online entry for Run Kildare events is now open at — www.kildaremarathon.ie.



Cold doesn't bother Wilson

Sportsworld AC's Jean Wilson is a woman of many trades and a master of some, as she proved by winning the women's race at the Dublin Masters Cross-Country Championships in St Anne's Park, Raheny, last Sunday.

The 37-year-old, who lives in Kilcock in Co Kildare, made little of the cold and wet conditions at the north Dublin venue by cruising to victory in the 3k race in 10.57.

As well as being an industrious athlete, logging over 50 miles each week, she is also a full-time research fellow at NUI Maynooth, Co Kildare, and mother of a four-year-old son, Noah.

Furthermore, each summer she plays tag-rugby, a sport she truly loves.

"I started playing in 2005 and have pretty much nearly every year since. I love it — it's great craic, brilliant fun," she said.

"It's great being a runner because it's very easy to get into tag and, if you are used to playing tag, then you will find running pretty easy.

"I will go back to my old team in Terenure, south Dublin, this summer. We normally have a league from May to August.

"It's the one time that fellas and girls will actually play together.

"The game is structured so that women will get a look in because women get more points if they score a try, so the lads will

actually involve the girls in the game."

It's not surprising to hear that, given her variety of commitments, she finds little time for socialising.

"I don't go out much. But I would sooner get up fresh and enjoy my run. All of my friends are into running, so it's my social life as well," says Jean, who picked up running aged 30.

Needless to say, she was overjoyed with her display on Sunday. A relentless front-running display secured her a facile victory over her 50 fellow competitors; Ann Curley (Donore Harriers) was eight seconds adrift in second, with clubmate Dervilla Holmes third in 11.10.

Wilson wasn't too bothered by the inclement weather conditions.

"It's cold, but it's a short race, so you tend to try and go out hard and stay out. That was my objective today," she said.

The men's 6k race was won in similarly impressive fashion by Raheny Shamrock's Mick Traynor, who was competing in the Over-45 category.

This contest was entirely dominated by Raheny men, with a total of five in the top 10, including David Kirwin (O-35) third, Damien Martin (O-45) fourth, Simon Reede (O-35) sixth and Eoin Brady (O-45) seventh. A huge field of 124 took part in the men's race.

EOGHAN YOUNG-MURPHY