

The elite of Irish athletics gathered at Santry Stadium in Dublin over the weekend for this years All-Ireland Track and Field Championships. The last chance for some to make qualifying standards for the upcoming European Championships in Barcelona meant there was a high standard across many of the events. In comparison to other years there was a low attendance from Kerry but what was lacked in numbers was more than made up for in ability and the results showed.

Claire Fitzgerald continued Tralee Harriers recent strong tradition of producing national champion weight throwers by claiming the national title in the discus with a throw of 44.78m, giving her a comfortable margin of victory over Deidre Murphy of Leevale who was second in 42.05. Back home only recently from a year study in Manhattan Claire also picked up a silver medal in the Javelin throw, back slightly from her best with 38.24m, capping off a season slightly marred by injury but which also saw her win multiple titles while in America and cement her position as one of the top throwers in the country.

Daniel Clifford of Farranfore Maine Valley also made it to the podium but it took him until Sunday to do so. On Saturday his long running battle with Luke Mangan of Clonliffe Harriers continued in the shot putt where the gold and silver medals were debated in the high 15m region, just beyond either athlete at the moment. In the end Mangan just managed to sneak past into 3rd but Clifford more than made up for that in the Discus; opening the season with a 44m pb he still has time to extend his bronze medal winning throw from the weekend of 46.09m, 2.5m beyond the best throw of 4th place Sean Breathnach who deposed Clifford from 1st at the AAI Games in Castleisland.

Many of the counties athletes, past, present and future, attend these championships each year to watch and no doubt a strong St. Brendan's AC contingent was there to cheer Ailbhe Courtney on her run in the 100m Hurdles where she finished 5th. Having only moved down to the distance from her preferred 400m Hurdles discipline she ran well in race that was won by Derval O'Rourke.

Next weekend these three athletes and many more besides will be competing in Kerry colours at the National League Round 2 in Athlone.

With the Munster and National Masters Championships both on within the next month many Irish athletes travelled to Cardiff in Wales for the British Masters Track and Field Championships on the 3rd and 4th of July. The prolific Jim O'Shea of Farranfore Maine Valley AC, went looking to add to the Indoor British gold medal he had won in the high jump. An excellent 1.33m in the M65 category put him fighting with the outdoor gold with Collin Green of the appositely named Midland Masters Athletics Club and both men were eventually awarded joint first. Another fantastic result for Jim.

For those with a penchant for the mile or marathon there is plenty to keep you occupied over the next few weeks. The first Maxi Marathon Killarney will take place on Saturday July 17th. A 15 mile course leading off from Molls Gap the race has received an AAI permit and already has a strong entry. The race will be monitored with digital timing chips and afterwards a BBQ will be held at The Ross where prizes in all categories will be presented along with the Hugh O'Flaherty Perpetual Trophy. Entry for the race is €50 and registrations are excepted on maximarathonkillarney.com and all participants will receive a goodie bag and event t shirt as well as official medal. Buses will depart with the competitors from Muckcross House at 6.45ap for the start line where the race will get underway at 9.30am

The Killarney Summerfest 5km will take place on July 24th with details being finalised. Breda Barrett is running a training group for this race in Killarney and for further details can be contacted on 0861623103.

Star of the Laune AC are again holding their annual Kilgobnet 4 Mile Walk and Run, setting off from Kilgobnet in Beaufort on July 30th. The competition has an AAI permit and as well as a souvenir of the race for all finishers there will be prizes for 1st to 3rd in the Senior Men's and Women's and 1st in Masters Men's and Women's categories from M40 and W35 upwards while the overall winner will be presented with the Fr. Michael Kelliher Memorial Cup. Entry is €15 for individual, €25 for a family or €10 to take part in the walk and all of the proceeds will go to the Mill Hill Mission in Cameroon.