

The SIAB International at Scotsoun, Glasgow, was marred by gale winds on Saturday where six Kerry athletes made up the ranks of the Irish team for the annual quadrangular match between the schools associations of the home countries. For many this would be their first taste of international competitions and with only the final events of the national championships next weekend it nicely rounds up the athletics season.

Though none of Kerry's athletes brought home a medal they all ranked highly in a competition which is generally dominated by the much better funded English team; quite often these trips serve as an indication of just how far behind our neighbours we are in the coaching and sporting infrastructure stakes. This was especially marked in that all Kerry's athletes were competing in the highly technical jumps and throws events and though we progress has been made in recent years we are still playing a catch up game.

Eoin O'Carroll was one of the select few athletes chosen to compete in two events at these championships, producing an excellent jump of 6.64m to place just outside the medals in fourth. It was a desperately tight finish as 6.61m finished in fifth and he was kept off the podium by only 4cm, 6.68m taking bronze. He was slightly back from his best in the triple with 12.84m the professionalism of the English and Scottish athletes showed with the first two medals contested at over 14.50m. As yet in Ireland there are only a handful of amateur triple jump coaches and Eoin has made tremendous progress in the past year with only limited help. His fourth in the long jump was equalled by Jonathon Foley whose 3.70m jump was a 10cm improvement, in poor conditions, from his jump at the Tailteann qualifiers a few weeks back.

Mairead O'Neill had a solid throw in the girls hammer of 39.45m, only slightly back on her recent throws and Hannah O'Sullivan also threw well in the discus with 32.95m. PJ Galvin showed his consistency regardless of conditions with a 1.75m and Una Marley produced a 2.50m jump in the pole vault, only 20cm off of a bronze but again the ability of coaching and training shone through with England's top vaulted setting a new record of 3.71m.

Some of the athletes who competed over the weekend have been competing in their events for less than a year and some only turned to them seriously in the run up to this year's schools season. With a long off season ahead hopefully these leading lights of Kerry athletics will return next year with even greater performances.

The Kerry Men's and Women's National League teams and the Riocht Men's team made the long journey to Athlone IT for the second round this weekend. The Riocht AC team, competing in Division 1 and still missing a few athletes in key events, competed well all round and can look forward to getting stronger for an assault on the competition next year. Both Kerry teams achieved qualification from Division 1 last year and put in very strong performances. While points were still being totalled as this went to print the Kerry women's team have, at the first attempt, definitely qualified for the National League Final in either 3rd or 4th position which is an outstanding achievement considering that many of the teams they will be up against will be anchored by major international athletes, many of whom will be competing in Barcelona shortly. The men's team may yet be joining them but the points were too close to call with them fighting for the last spot against North Down.

The Killarney Summerfest 5km will take place on July 24th, starting at the Killarney Plaza Hotel at 7pm. Registration opens at the hotel at 5pm and there is a €10 entry fee. Prizes will be presented afterwards for Senior, Masters and Junior categories, both men's and women's, and the event has been granted an AAI Permit. For further details race organiser Breda Barrett 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.

St. Brendan's AC will be holding a 10km road race, "The Banna Run", on Sunday August 1st. The entry fee is €20 and the race will be getting underway at 9.30am.