

The 125th edition of the IUAA Intersvarsity Championships was hosted by Trinity College Dublin and held at Santry Stadium on Friday evening and Saturday morning. The unfortunate scheduling of college tests kept some athletes away, such as Eilish Fitzpatrick who would have been in contention in the sprints, but in general there was good attendance with a high standard. For the counties U23s and Seniors this marked the start of a relatively sparse and compressed season; due to the world championships in Barcelona the majority of season will have come to an end by early July and with the season being so short many were in search of good performances over the weekend.

One of only two county athletes to take gold over the weekend Daniel Clifford smashed the 45m barrier in the discus for the first time on two occasions to open the season with a new personal best of 45.83m and a new IT Tralee record on day 2 of the competition. The long drive up on Friday did little to help him in the late evening shot putt competition and although only slightly off his best with a throw of 13.85m an exact reversal of events that led to his indoor colleges gold medal played out with Luke Mangan (DCU), who had lain second for the duration of the competition, overtaking Clifford on his final throw to push him into second.

Katie O'Shea had a short drive to the grounds since being exiled to the capital on work placement and proved a rule which is true in almost every case: college is not conducive to training. Long hours have kept her away from the throwing circle and whilst it took her a while to get back into the swing of the hammer she secured a bronze medal in a high standard field with 43.78m. In adding bronze's in the shot putt and 8kg weight for distance she contributed 12 of the 52 points University Limerick accumulated to win the Throws Cup and in addition to James Nagle's win in the men's hammer with 12.46m this meant that the two Kerry athletes were responsible for more than half of the total points won by the seven person throws team, stopping DCU taking a clean sweep of all trophies on offer. Following on from the achievements of Gillian O'Sullivan race walking has caught on strongly in the county in recent years. Two of the counties best lined out for University College Cork over the weekend with Caoimhe Casey taking second in the women's 1500m in 7.15.19 and Niall Prendiville, still on the mend after injury, taking third in the 3000m race in 13.30.34.

Marie Flynn was competing for University College Dublin for the first time and opened her season with 36.97m in the hammer for fifth and a fifth place in the discus. Many of these athletes will be in action again next Monday the 3rd at the Munster Junior, U23 and Senior Championships in Cork IT with day 1 of the County Juvenile Championships taking place on Sunday the 2cd.

Another long running event with a slightly larger attendance took place over the weekend with the 116th running of the Penn Relays in Philadelphia. With a crowd of over 54,000 sitting in the stands to watch the likes of Usain Bolt and Shelly Ann Fraser this competition, purported to be the largest in America, attracts all the top athletes from across the American club and college scene. Clare Fitzgerald was one of only two Manhattan College athletes to perform well in this high end competition, finishing ninth in the Javelin with 40.72 and eleventh in the discus with 43.31m, both close to seasons best.

The revolutionary fever many of the national broadsheets had predicted, or indeed hoped for, seems to have failed to manifest itself at the 3rd AAI National Congress held in Sligo over the weekend. Though opposed by former position holder Michael Heary the current president Liam Hennessy was reinstated with a comfortable margin after months of controversy surrounding the organisations handling of affairs relating to its previous CEO. In elections to the National Board Kerry AAI Chairman Martin Fitzgerald narrowly missed out on the position of Munster Delegate to Mary Cronin