

The Tailteann Games Interprovincial Finals at Tullamore on the 26th marked a return to Schools competition for some athletes in the intermediate age group after the recent Schools National Championships. The prize at stake was a place on the Irish Schools team for the Home Countries International later this year in Scotland. Two athletes would be selected in each event and the results of the provincial championships would also be taken into account; the aim being to overlook off days or unrepeatable performances and select the strongest team possible to represent Ireland.

Kerry has had a strong tradition of qualifying athletes to the International in the past with many of the counties top athletes getting their first taste of international experience on this trip, which rotates between the four home nations of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England.

Without doubt Eoin O'Carroll was one of the first names to go down on the team sheet and would have required very little deliberation by the selectors. While unable to repeat the double he pulled off at the Schools Nationals he defended his long jump title at 6.60m and was narrowly overtaken in the triple jump but has held consistently over the 13m mark, hitting 13.06m on the day to qualify for both events. He'll be joined by fellow Mount Hawk Tralee students PJ Galvin who's lack of misses in the high jump elevated him to 2cd from a group of three athletes on 1.75m, just 5cm off the lead, and also Una Marley who's 2.30m in the pole vault would have been good enough for 2cd but an off day produced a few misses which saw her placed 4th. This was taken into consideration however and when compared to her results at nationals and provincials saw her selected.

The pole vault became the only event for the county to qualify both a male and female athlete in, indicating its growth in recent years. Jonathon Foley of Presentation Milltown was involved in a very tight race for the gold which eventually had to be split three ways in a tie at 3.60m and his consistently strong performances saw him get the nod. Hannah O'Sullivan of Boherbue Comprehensive School was fought out a very close discus competition to record 33.08 for second and the team was completed by Mairead O'Neill of Colaiste Treasa in Cork, competing for Gneeveguilla, who easily won the girls hammer at 40.72m.

The day following the Tailteann Games saw Tullamore opened up again for the All-Ireland Junior and U23 Championships with numbers slightly depleted from the hectic days and weeks of competition that led up to the event. Please note that I don't have the full results to hand and any omissions will be included next week.

Clare Fitzgerald of Tralee Harriers made a victorious return to the Irish circuit after her stint in Manhattan Collage, outclassing the field to take gold in the junior javelin with 43.19 and in the discus with 38.82m. Karen O'Connor of Tralee Harriers continued the families strong tradition in the weights by taking silver in the U23 discus with 29.62m. Emma Prendiville was back on home soil after last weekends 10km race walking championships in Bedford and took the national junior walk title in an easy stride. Further gold was accounted for by Daniel Clifford who threw 44.30 to claim the national U23 discus title.

The Kerry AAI County Championships will take place at An Ríocht, Castleisland, this Wednesday the 30th of June, starting from 6pm. Entry is €5 per athlete