

One of the major track and field competitions in the juvenile calendar, an Irish Schools Championship medal is one of the most prestigious awards on offer, second only to the Taltian games which follow on from this competition as a qualifier for the Irish Schools international team.

Unlike the AAI structure which has an age group for every age between 13 and 19 only 4 categories exist in Schools competitions which brings the best athletes from two and often 3 AAI categories together. The career highlight of many of Kerry's athletes occurred during these championships, most recently Eoin Leen's shattering of Victor Costello's standing intermediate boys shot putt record in 2003.

Without doubt Kerry's top performer of the weekend was Eoin O'Carroll of Mercy Mount Hawk who put in a series of stunning jumps to take gold in both the Intermediate boys Long Jump and Triple Jump. Though well used to picking up multiple medals the Schools limits an athlete to only two events and double gold is a distinction achieved by very few. If his 6.63m winning jump in the long jump and his huge 13.64m in the Triple Jump can be followed up with strong performances at the Tailten's he should be garneted of a spot in at least one, if not both, of these events for the international team. Mount Hawk could also qualify an athlete for the other Triple Jump spot; though back from his best of just over 13m Clarence Kennedy was 3rd with 12.94m. In the intermediate boys High Jump PJ Galvin of Mount Hawk continued to build on his recent fine performances finishing 2nd in a very close competition with a jump of 1.80m while Jonathon Foley of Presentation Milltown was 3rd in the pole vault with 3.40m.

Kerry's only other gold medallist at this competition, showing their scarcity, was Emma Prenderville of PS Corcha Duibhne. Recently returned from the European Youth Trials in Moscow Emma showed no sign of jet lag when taking the Senior girls 3000m walk title in 14.37.66. Presentation Tralee athlete's were to the fore in this category with Sinead O'Connor finishing 2nd in the Triple Jump with 10.63m and Ailbhe Courtney picked up a double bronze in the 400m sprint and 400m hurdles. The Pres team then went on to pick up a bronze in the 4x100m relay.

Next weekend a combined Kerry track and field team will take part in the AAI National League's 1st division having achieved promotion last year. Made up of many stalwarts and up and coming athletes Kerry will have their work cut out for them against the top clubs in the country. Round 1 takes place this Sunday at Tullamore.