

SOME GOOD ATHLETICS PERFORMANCES IN NORMAL YEAR

Padraig Griffin

THE PAST YEAR has been more of a solid than a spectacular one for Leitrim athletics with some very good domestic performances by new athletes coming to the fore. It was a year in which Colin Griffin first took a break from top class International athletics in which he has been involved with a considerable level of domestic and International success since 1995 and later on decided that in order to build up a career he would need to make that break permanent. Fellow Olympian of a former era, Eddie Leddy (Munich 1972 and Montreal 1976), who lives in the United States was also accorded the significant honour of being inducted into the Knoxville Track Club Hall of Fame earlier this year.

Laura Reynolds whom Colin coaches had a difficult year because of a persistent injury during the mid summer period which hampered her preparation for the European Championships in Zurich in August. However, she had some very good performances earlier when in April she placed sixth in the Podebrady IAAF Racewalking Challenge Womens 20K in 1.34.24 and followed up with a 37th place in the European qualifying time of 1.32.25 in the World Cup of Racewalking in Taicang, China, in May.

Things were going very well and on track for a good performance in Zurich when during the same month she finished seventh in an IAAF Racewalking Challenge event in La Coruna in 1.31.57 which was her second fastest performance after the London Olympics. Unfortunately, a difficult injury followed and a combination of the effects of the injury plus a delay in getting to the Course in Zurich due to the failure



of the organisers to ensure that a scheduled athletes' bus operated as advertised unsettled her and led to her having to drop out just after halfway in the European Championship event. The good news is that she is back in training in good form and will prepare for the World Championships next year.

The most outstanding Leitrim performances came in the National Senior Championships in Santry in July where two Carrick on Shannon athletes took home four medals. On the Saturday Eanna Madden tied for first with Wexford athlete David Hynes in the 200m Final in a time of 21.42 while on Sunday Gerard O Donnell won the 110m Hurdles in 14.57 and was third in the 400m hurdles behind the talented Waterford athlete

■ **Eanna Madden and David Hynes (Menapians) lunge for the line at the end of the Glo Health Irish Senior 200m Final. Unusually, The cameras were unable to separate them and they were awarded joint first**

Thomas Barr in 53.49. Eanna Madden added to his 200m achievement by taking second in the 100m in 10.90 behind Jamie Davis of Raheny who recorded the same time. It could have been better if Laura Reynolds could have done the 5000m Walk as she would have won it easily but she was just not ready to compete after her injury

Three medals were brought to Leitrim from the AAI Indoor Championships in



Athlone with Dearbhaile Beirne winning the Under 17 Walk, Eoin Gaffey the Under 14 Walk and Stephen McDermott the Under 17 High Jump. When the outdoor Championships took place in Tullamore in July Dearbhaile Beirne again won the Under 17 Walk with Eoin Gaffey taking the silver medal in the Under 14 event and Stephen McDermott the silver in the Under 17 High Jump. Joanna Duignan of Carrick on Shannon AC who had a brilliant season in 2013 but was greatly hampered by injury in 2014 made a comeback to top competition and took third in the Under 19 400m. Carrick's Eanna Madden added to his growing reputation by winning the AAI Under 23 100m and 200m in Cork. The only national cross country medal to come to Leitrim was won by Patrick Montgomery of North Leitrim as part of the Connacht Under 11 Boys Team which won bronze medals in Waterford.

At Schools level Leitrim won only two Connacht titles in Athlone with

Dearbhaile Beirne winning the Intermediate Walk and Sibeal Reynolds the Long Jump. Dearbhaile went on to win the bronze medal at the Tailteann Schools Interprovincial in June.

Twenty schools took part in the Leitrim Sports Hall Championships promoted by the Leitrim Sports Partnership and the AAI County Board. In the Final in Ballinamore Sportshall all four titles were won by Gaelscoil Liathroma. Fifteen counties contested the National Finals in Athlone where the strong Gaelscoil Liathroma team in the 3rd and 4th Class Girls section took third behind Donegal and Clare. Third and fourth Boys shared fifth position with Louth while the fifth and sixth Girls and Boys were 8th and 6th respectively. On the home front St Bridget's, Drumcong, won the Gilmartin Trophy for the best overall school at the County Primary Schools Championships in May. In the National Community Games Finals in Athlone in

■ **Gerard O'Donnell being congratulated by AAI President Professor Ciaran O Cathain after receiving the gold medal for winning the 110m Hurdles at the Glo Health AAI Irish National Championships in Santry.**

August Leitrim did not get among the winners of Athletics Awards.

Over the last winter period two Clubs, Carrick on Shannon and North Leitrim, celebrated forty years in existence. Carrick-on-Shannon had a very enjoyable night's celebration in the Bush Hotel at which many memorabilia from over the period were on display. Leitrim County Board was also forty years old earlier this year. The coming year marks the Golden Jubilee of Ballinamore Athletic Club which made its competitive debut on the second Sunday of November 1964 at a roadrace in Kenagh and was formally launched in May 1965. There will be a number of activities to mark the occasion over the next number of months.