

## Celtic Gold for Munster Athletes

The Celtic Cross Country International took place in Greenmount, Antrim on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Six Munster athletes in total were selected to compete for the Irish teams, 4 on the U/17 teams & 2 on the U/17 Developmental Teams. There was a terrific individual gold medal win for **Fearghal Curtin, Youghal A.C.** with both the Irish Girls & Boys U/17 teams claiming the team titles.

Two Munster athletes competed on the Boys U/17 Irish team who won gold. **Fearghal Curtin, Youghal A.C.** stormed home to victory leading the Irish Boys U/17 team to gold in the Boys U/17 race. Fearghal has had an outstanding Cross Country season winning silver in the National Boys U/16 & placing 8<sup>th</sup> in Boys U/17. The second Munster athlete on the Irish team, **Cathal McCarthy, Doheny A.C.** finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place & he too has been prominent at National level placing 4<sup>th</sup> in the Boys U/16 race in Santry in November. **Ruairi Casey, Togher A.C.** ran as part of the Irish U/17 Developmental Team & competed very well to come home in 10<sup>th</sup> place & first for his team.



*2014 Irish Boys U/17 Celtic Cross Country International Team*

The Irish Girls U/17 team was also victorious with Munster athletes, **Aoife Hamilton, West Waterford A.C. & Aisling Kelly, St. John's A.C.** forming an integral part of the team coming home in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> places. Both Girls have excelled in the current Cross Country season registering top 12 places at the recent National Even & Uneven Cross Country Championships. On those two occasions, Aisling placed 4<sup>th</sup> in both the Girls U/15 & U/16 races & Aoife was 5<sup>th</sup> in the Girls U/16 & 11<sup>th</sup> in the Girls U/17 races. Aoife was selected for the Irish team last year but could not compete due to illness so it was good to see her win a gold team medal this year.

**Fiona Everard, Bandon A.C.** was selected to run for the Irish Girls U/17 Development Team which placed 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Ireland & Scotland. Fiona competed very well finishing in 12<sup>th</sup> place & has also enjoyed two top 10 finishes at the recent National Even Age & Uneven Age Cross Country Championships (8<sup>th</sup> Girls U/16 & 9<sup>th</sup> Girls U/17). Congratulations to all 6 athletes on such great achievements.



*2014 Irish Girls U/17 Celtic Cross Country International Team*

**Report Taken from AAI Website dated Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014.**

“The Celtic International Cross Country was held in Greenmount, Antrim on Saturday last as part of the IAAF International meet. Conditions were soft underfoot but thankfully the rain held off.

The u17 races were combined with the Junior events giving large fields of high quality athletes. The girls u 17 were the first to compete over 3600m with **Siofa O’Flaherty, SLOT**, returning to defend her title which she won in Wales last year. Siofa was in excellent form having taken both u16 and u17 National titles and true to form took up the pole position within the first 800m of the race. Her position was never challenged throughout the race despite competing against the Junior athletes. Siofa finished a clear winner of the race from Gillian Black Scotland u17 and Catriona Graves Scotland u20, leading the u17 team to a victory in the team event. Next home for the Irish was **Isabelle Carren, Skerries** who finished fourth in the U17 Celtic classification with **Aoife Hamilton, West Waterford** in 7th position and **Aisling Kelly, St John’s**, in 8th position. Excellent team running from the Irish which gave them team gold.

The u17 Development team gave some very strong performances being lead home by **Emer Fitzpatrick, DSD** in 6th place, **Emma O’Brien, Inbhear Dee** 11th, **Fiona Everard, Bandon**, 12th and **Hannah Blake, Inbhear Dee**, in 13th place. These placings would have placed the team in third position behind Ireland, 12pts and Scotland, 17pts

Next up were the boys u17 and again they were competing against the Junior athletes in a combined race over 5600m which is quite a step up for these young athletes. **Ferghal Curtin, Youghal** showed he was well able for the longer distance coming home first in the u17 Celtic competition followed strongly by **Alan Monaghan, Bohermeen** in 3rd and **Shane Hughes, Mullingar** in 4th with **Cathal McCarthy** completing the Irish team in 8th place. This very strong team performance from the boys gave them the team gold with 8 pts from Wales, 23 pts, Scotland, 28pts and Ulster 33pts.

The u17 Development team was lead home by **Ruairi Casey, Togher** 10th, **Oisín O’Gibne, Boyne**, 14th and **Conal Hayes, Le Cheile** in 19th position.

Unfortunately **Sean Carrigg ,Clonliffe**, was unable to finish as he had been unwell prior to the competition.

Overall there were excellent performances from all the under 17 athletes.

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