

PITCH & PUTT IRELAND



National Strokeplay Finals 2026

Intermediate Gents

August 8th

Intermediate Gents Official Venue

Tullamore Pitch and Putt

Championship Preview by John Manning

Gents Intermediate Preview

To 2024 Leinster Scotch Foursomes session winner **Martin Flynn** (McDonagh) will go the honour of pitching the opening teeshot of the 2026 National Intermediate Strokeplay championship. That will be in the company of Killineer's **Colm Lynch**, who earned a bronze medal in the recent Leinster Strokeplay championship at Laytown.

That twoball will be rapidly followed by the pairing of provincial and national Scotch Foursomes session winner **Paul Lynch** (Rathfeigh) along with Ardnacrusha's **Cyril Bourke**.

2025 National Mixed Foursomes winner **Adrian Anglim** (Hillview) will travel with confidence as will **Thomas Egan** (Glenville), who was in outstanding form a few weeks ago to lift the Leinster Strokeplay title at Laytown.

Twice a silver medallist in the National Mixed Foursomes, **Dean Courtney** (Riverdale) is paired with 2025 Dublin Strokeplay champion **Aaron Brazil** (Lucan).

Third in the 2020 Irish Open, **Dean Dinnegan** (Lough Owel) is likely to contend here as is **Christopher Finn** (Loughlinstown), the 2025 Leinster Strokeplay silver medallist (after an epic play-off with eventual winner Ruairi Fortune).

Ollie Lambe (Athgarvan) helped Kildare to the 2024 National Intermediate Inter-County championship. Lambe's playing partner is Dublin native **Pat Tyrrell** (Rochfortbridge) who played alongside Gus Carolan, Mattie Clarke, Leo O'Reilly and Mark Collins when Dublin were runners-up to Waterford in the National Inter-County championship at Waterford Glass in 1979. Tyrrel made his Inter-County debut at Tullamore in 1978.

2019 National Juvenile Inter-County winner **Bobby McCarron** (Listowel) will seek to improve on his fourth place finish in the 2022 National Intermediate Strokeplay championship.

Frank O'Brien (Collins) captured a bronze medal in this championship at Glenville eight years ago and has regularly featured on the championship leaderboard. Frank is drawn alongside 2025 National Non-Mixed Scotch Foursomes runner-up **Chris Cunningham** (Cloghogue)

John O'Keeffe (Custume) reached the 2025 Leinster Matchplay final. Since graduating to the adult ranks, 2023 National Juvenile Strokeplay champion and 2025 National Juvenile Matchplay champion **Jack McShane** (Gowran) won the CKW regional Matchplay championship.

2013 Leinster Junior Strokeplay champion and holder of a 2012 National Juvenile Inter-County bronze medal, **Aaron McDonagh** (Killineer) plays with last year's National Intermediate Inter-County runner-up **Mark Comerford** (Gowran)

The experienced **Brian Hartnett** was 1994 Munster Strokeplay runner-up and represented the Douglas 3rd-placed team in the 1992 Carrolls Club Tournament final.

Two men who carry out immense work for Pitch and Putt, **Brendan Crean** (Ierne) and **James Fleming** (Deerpark), open the second session. Brendan finished third in the 2026 Dublin Strokeplay championship while James made the final round of the 2018 National Intermediate Strokeplay championship at Glenville.

A final round qualifier in this championship in 2022 and 2023, **Anthony Butler** (Seapoint) won a bronze medal in the 2022 National Over-55s Junior grade Strokeplay championship at Bellewstown. Cameraman extraordinaire **Pat Kirwan** (Douglas) was a Munster Strokeplay champion at senior level away back in the 1980s. More recently, Pat was 2023 Cork Intermediate Strokeplay runner-up.

Another former leading juvenile (2024 All-Ireland Under-16 Matchplay champion), Claycastle's **Aidan Spence-Murphy**, claimed third position at St. Anne's last year. Aidan partners Erry's **Patsy Reamsbottom** (Ferbane), a runner-up in the 2013 National Over-55s Senior grade Strokeplay championship. Patsy contested the final round of the 2008 National Senior Strokeplay championship at Tullamore.

Perhaps the most experienced of all the players in the field, **Sean Minogue** (Riverdale), claimed a National Intermediate grade Strokeplay title (at Over-55s level) at McDonagh in 2018.

Minogue's fellow competitor, **Martin O'Sullivan** (St. Anne's), bids to build on his Junior silver medal performance at Lakeside three years back.

James Fleming (Mellows) contested a play-off at Laytown for the Leinster Strokeplay championship last month while **Ger Guerin** (Listowel) is a former Munster Matchplay semi-finalist.

Leading Kerry qualifier **Tony Blake** (Tralee) was a close up sixth in last year's 72-hole marathon at St. Anne's.

2025 Munster Intermediate Strokeplay bronze medallist and past provincial Matchplay finalist **Alan Keating** (St. Anne's) has made the All-Ireland Strokeplay final round in each of the last two years (filling fourth spot two years ago).

Michael Creagh (Deerpark) was third in the 2023 Munster Junior Strokeplay championship while **Ciarán White** (Bishopstown) was 2025 Munster Scotch Foursomes winner.

2026 National Matchplay runner-up **Darren Temple** (St. Stephen's) tuned-up for this championship by blitzing The Ranges in 94 to claim the Ballincollig club's Intermediate Scratch Cup. 2009 Leinster Juvenile Inter-County winner **Dillon Melia** is the sole home club representative and won the 2026 Vincent Murphy Intermediate Scratch Cup at Tullamore.

In a match-up that will attract a large gallery, **Billy Buckley** (Collinstown) links up with fellow former top juvenile **Ajay Barrett** (Listowel).

Billy was third in this championship two years ago. Ajay is the reigning Munster Strokeplay champion. Both reached National Under-16 finals in 2023, Ajay the Boys and Billy the Plate.

Billy was crowned 2022 Leinster Boys Matchplay champion while Ajay lifted the National Boys' Strokeplay title the same season.

In his first season in adult ranks, **Jason Kelly** (Bagenalstown) has won the Kildare and Michael Hogan Memorial Scratch Cups. As a juvenile, Jason lifted the 2025 All-Ireland Under-16 Strokeplay and Inter-County trophies.

2023 Munster Junior Matchplay champion **Colin Hennessy** (St. Anne's) finished fourth at St. Anne's twelve months ago, narrowly denied a bronze medal on the tiebreaker.

The final group of the day brings together 2025 Vincent Murphy Memorial Junior Scratch Cup runner-up (at Tullamore), **Jack Donoghue** (Rochfortbridge) and 2025 Munster Junior Strokeplay kingpin **Dave Connolly** (Crosshaven).

With conditions likely to be firm and bouncy, Stephen Shoer's remarkable 2008 all-time record 54-hole intermediate winning aggregate (of 133) looks to be completely out of reach as (more than likely) is Dayle Donohoe's 141, achieved in 2016. A more realistic target may be Keith O'Connor's 2003 tally of 144.