

# BACKSPIN

Official E-Zine of the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland

June, 2014



## Issue Highlights:

- A Look Back at the National Matchplay
- County Strokeplay Round Up
- A Review of the Irish Open
- Fermoy and Stackallen are Profiled ahead of the National Strokeplay Championships
- International Challenge Report

## BACKSPIN IS BACK!!

A Chara,

You are all very welcome to this the first edition of the new Pitch & Putt Union of Ireland e-zine encompassing the activities of the Union over the last number of months. The production of this e-zine is one of the ambitions of the Union's most recent strategic plan and it is hoped to produce another three editions of this e-zine in 2014. As well as the standard reporting of PPUI activities on our website it is hoped that this publication will enhance and give a better understanding of our unique game from a variety of perspectives.

Since my election to the new position of Communications and Press Officer back in February at Convention, I've set about trying to improve our reporting structures across our various forms of



*The Irish team that went so close against their Catalan opponents at Lloret Papalus at the weekend, eventually going down 13.5-10.5. The mixed team format brought together twelve players representing their country for the first time from under 18's to over 55's and everything in between. Back Row, L-R: Michael Murphy (Manager; Old County), Frank Ryan (St. Bridget's), Weeshie Murphy (Raffeen Creek), Kevin McCarthy (Rocklodge), Ian Dillon (St. Bridget's), Marty Fawl (Clare Road), John Carton (Kilbeggan) and Mary Farrell (Gaeil Colmcille; Asst. Manager). Front Row, L-R: Christy Broe (Old County), Shane Redmond (Channonrock), Helen Daly (Cill na Móna), Martha O'Brien (Lakeside), Maree O'Toole (Captain; Shandon) and Conor McCarthy (Deerpark). **Report on page 12.***

media through the website, Facebook, Twitter and Flickr pages. Also as part of the Strategic Plan a Communications and Press Sub-Committee has been appointed to work on these aims and I'm delighted to say that two of my predecessors as PRO of the Union, John Manning (Shandon, who is secretary of the sub-committee) along with Alan Hanlon (Collinstown) have come on board to offer their advice and expertise in this area. I'm also delighted to have Dublin County Board Secretary Linda Thomson (Glenville) and Tipperary County Board PRO Paul O'Brien (Lakeside) working with us on this Committee. We've met once already this year and have set out some targets for the coming year, mainly related to our internal reporting structures which is our main focus for 2014.

We hope that you've enjoyed some of the features that have appeared on the website already this year between previews, reports, interviews and other items of interest. I would like to thank both the Glenville and Parteen clubs for their assistance in promoting both the recent Irish Open and National Matchplay events on the website, particularly Christine Mulvey (Glenville) and Pat Earls (Parteen) who were more than helpful in organising both the Irish Open launch and National Matchplay draws respectively. This edition focusses on the Irish Open, National Matchplay, International Challenge with Catalonia, County Strokeplays, PJ Bell and National Ladies Social Day events in particular. We also look ahead to the National Ladies and Gents Strokeplays in Fermoy and Stackallen with a reflection on some of the previous National competitions hosted by both clubs. There are also some Greenkeeping tips to help our courses through the unpredictable summer months!

*(Continued on last page)*

## CUNNIGAR ARE P.J. BELL WINNERS AGAIN



*Cunnigar claimed the PJ Bell Mixed Team Competition on the last Sunday in April. The scramble team of Paddy Noonan, Jacinta O'Mahony and Lorraine Troy combined for a score of 64 1/3, which was good enough for the win. This was a second win for both Paddy and Lorraine in the Competition, the previous victory coming on home turf in 2011. A Ballinlough/Douglas combination team of Alf Hanrahan, Ger Hanrahan and Brian Downey were Runners-Up for the second year running with a score of 65, while teams from Lakeside and Douglas took the two session prizes.*



# NATIONAL MATCHPLAY REVIEW

By Paul O'Brien



*Ladies Matchplay Champion 2014, Breda Lonergan (Tipp Hills) pictured with runner up Tara Dillon (St. Bridget's), semi-finalists Marian Byrne (St. Bridget's) and Margaret Hogan (Tullamore) and PPUI President Eamonn Birchall.*

It was a quite enthralling weekend in Parteen over the June Bank Holiday Weekend. The sun beamed down, the heavens opened, the wind blew hard at times but what a spectacle we were proud to see. Parteen had its doubters prior to the event but the club can hold their heads up high. They presented a course which was a massive test for all players; it beat a lot of players over the weekend and proved the notion that it is one tough track.

John Walsh emerged victorious in the Gents and winning this title 12 years on from his previous victory at Hillview was indeed a magnificent achievement. When you consider he had to beat players like Liam O'Donovan, Mick Hogan, Kieran Earls, Derek Courtney, Chris Scannell and Damien Fleming, it is fair to say his triumph was fully deserved. Beating four previous National Champions along the way just proves how well Walsh played over the weekend and with the recent death of John Garrett from his home club, it was a win that will somewhat lift the mood around the Collins course. John dedicated his win to his friend, a very nice gesture indeed and this win now gives him a total of three National Titles, Hillview being his most previous one. Walsh to be fair has been knocking on the door quite a bit since 2002 to land another National and he got

his due reward on Monday afternoon.

His opponent Damien Fleming will admit he was far from his best but Walsh was relentless in his quest for another Matchplay Title. Like every great player should do he never took his foot off the pedal in the match and despite a mini fight back from Damien, Walsh hit a superb pitch to the tricky 15<sup>th</sup> to close the game out on a score line of 5&3. He continued Cork's dominance in this Championship over the last 10 years where they have had nine winners, a very telling statistic for the Rebel County. He becomes the fourth player from Cork to win the Matchplay more than once and having lost three finals so it is fair to say that no one will begrudge John of his win. He will look forward to trying to retain the title in Lakeside next year, a course John has played very well in the past. He will also be looking forward to Stackallen in a few weeks time to try and capture the Strokeplay title also.

Some new players caught the eye over the weekend. Jason O'Brien (Deerpark) can be very proud of his efforts in reaching the Last 16, the Munster Junior Gents Matchplay Champion would appear to have a very bright future. The European Strokeplay Champion Ian Farrelly returned to the Quarter-Finals for the first time since 2007 and

this indicates he will be a major force in Stackallen, should he qualify. Kieran Earls had massive pressure on his shoulders over the weekend but he played defiantly all through and he is sure to be in contention at the majors in the years to come. Paul Tobin of St Patricks is one player I will be keeping my eye on in the near future; there is a big competition in him I feel. Sean Kearney did very well in what was his first major championship and will be proud of his efforts. We also had the usual players of Darren Collins and Derek Courtney once again featuring in the quarter finals, they remain as consistent as ever. Chris Scannell and JR Crangle were the beaten semi-finalists this year and you can be certain that they will be there or thereabouts every year such is their calibre.

Each finalist who got through gave it their all. It was a learning curve for some, some no doubted wanted to hide away as they were not able to master the course. We also had some real battles along with a few heavy defeats but this Championship is one that has energised so many players of the years. It is an energy sapping tournament but one every player who qualifies loves to play in. John Walsh was by far the best player on show over the weekend, his win will be monumental to him as the year unfolds no doubt.

In terms of the Ladies, the famine is now over for Breda Lonergan. 26 years after her last final appearance and 27 years after her All Ireland Strokeplay win at Athgarvan, the genial Tipperary Hills player has become the first Tipperary Lady to win this title since its inception in 1946. A player who took a leave of absence from the game in the mid-nineties, returned in 2010 and dominated Munster Championships since, but she really found her calling this weekend. She has an incredible record at the Parteen course and she had to beat great players in their own right along the way in Siobhan Keely, Eleanor Walsh, Mairead O'Toole, Marian Byrne & Tara Dillon. Beating three former All Ireland Champions along the way evidently proved just how tough this win was for the Tipperary native. Her win against Marian Byrne where she was 5 down after 27 once again proved that she never throws in the towel and her will to win is as ever present today as it was 30 years ago.

The final with Tara was a real ding dong affair and Breda held a great birdie putt on the 29th to move one in front but a missed putt on the 32nd hole was followed up with a great chip in on the 33rd to move one clear yet again. An uncharacteristic miss to go dormie two on the 34th opened the door for Tara which she duly took advantage of by winning the 35th. Breda

missed a very tricky putt on the final hole to capture the title and so it was Sudden Death where both players missed the green and left a tricky up and down. Lonergan was first in with a slippy four foot putt and now the pressure was on Tara to follow but unfortunately for her she saw her putt slide by and we had a new Champion in Breda Lonergan and the first Munster winner since 1991. Breda to be fair is a fantastic player, a fantastic winner at all times as well it must be said. Her ethos is simply to win and it's a great trait to have.

She dedicated her win to the great Sean Keane, who was a very good friend of Breda's. Her club in Tipperary Hills has had troubled times in the past but now they have an National individual Champion for the first time since 1988 when Eddie Lonergan won the National Boys. Breda had lost three previous semi-finals up to her match with Marian Byrne, the last back in 2010 at Larkspur Park where she was defeated by Geraldine Ward. She is a massive player and there is no doubt she will be very hopeful in Fermoy in the Strokeplay. She will also have the honour of trying to retain the title in her native county next year when it rolls into Lakeside, a course she knows like the back of her hand. Once again we congratulate Breda on her tremendous win, she had to wait a long time for it but it is clearly evident that when you have talent you can be of any age to perform to your maximum.

Of course we continued to have the usual ladies to the very forefront this weekend in the likes of Sheelagh Elmes, Chrissie Byrne, Eleanor Walsh and Margaret Hogan. The latter had an interesting statistic in reaching the semi-finals 40 years after her first, an amazing achievement by the Tullamore legend. Marian Byrne continues to shine as does Tara Dillon. Mairead O'Toole came of age to reach the quarter finals. We also had the youthful look of Martha O'Brien and Una Brosnan, a great and perhaps inspiring thing to for up and coming girls to see.

And so, that was the weekend in a nutshell, we congratulate all our winners, the host club and thank all who came out to support. The live blog was a major success, it's certainly something that can be worked on, but that said it was a step in the right direction. Darren Keogh, Kildare PRO deserves great credit for his updates to their Facebook page also. Overall it was great to see the event run so smoothly.

The Championships will roll into Lakeside next year for the first time since 1989 and once again it promises to be a scintillating weekend on the June Bank Holiday.



*Gents Matchplay Champion 2014, John Walsh (Collins) pictured with runner up Damien Fleming (Deerpark), semi-finalist Chris Scannell (Collins) and PPUJ President Eamonn Birchall.*

## GREENKEEPING TIPS FOR JUNE & JULY

### General

- Keep records of all feeds, fungicides and herbicides used and the rate at which they go out. Pitch & Putt Clubs are required by law to keep all records of fungicides used.
- Know the area of your greens to ensure that correct feeds go out.
- Example of a correct level of feed: A 30 metre squared green- 35 grams m<sup>2</sup> of fertiliser for every square metre of green should be applied.  $35 \times 30 = 1.050 \text{ kg}$ .
- Safety Equipment must be used at all times, i.e. ear muffs, safety boots and eye protection where applicable.
- Course maintenance shed should have a first aid box and an eye wash station as well.
- Any accident that occurs on the course must be recorded and club officers notified.

### Mowing

- Cutting Heights: 4-5mm in height.
- Weekly check of mower to ensure bottom blade adjustment is correct.
- The more cuts a green can get (with a correctly set mower), the better a putting surface you will have.
- The direction of mowing should be varied to produce a more upright growth. Constant mowing of the greens in the same direction will create a washboard effect resulting in an uneven and bumpy surface.
- A 'clock system' standing at the back of the green, looking at the tee-box is the best style of mowing to use, i.e. 6-12, 9-3, 8-2 and 10-4.



## Sanding, Feeding and Fertilising

- Top dressing programme implemented on 2-3 week cycle. Light topdressing of 2 wheelbarrows of sand per green.
- Weeds should be removed by handpicking.
- Due to inconsistent weather conditions, disease is more prevalent. Fungicide should be applied when first signs occur, i.e. systemic or contact.
- All Sprinklers should be checked and ready for use. Areas should be irrigated if signs of drought are showing. Watch in particular for high spots in greens and greens that are exposed to full day's sun.
- If greens become hungry or lethargic, feeds (solid or liquid) may be applied again according to weather conditions in coming months. Solid feeds should only be applied in forecasted wet conditions. If conditions pertaining to drought, liquid feed may be applied, hence cutting out the danger of scorching with solid fertilisers.
- Another area that needs tending to is the collar and surrounds of greens, these areas should be treated with a selected broadleaf (buttercup or daisy) weed killer (relay) and these areas should be treated once during the growing season to help create a barrier that weeds can't appear around the green. This also creates a better chipping surface.
- Any areas around greens that are getting heavy traffic and are worn, solid fertiliser should be applied to worn and bare areas. Bare areas should be hand-dressed with a divot mix of sand, seed and peat moss.

## Hole Changing

- Pin Positions should be changed 2-3 times a week where applicable depending on how intense play is on particular greens. Chose areas which are not worn and divide greens into quarters which have a potential 2-3 positions. A pin should never be cut midway on a slope and should be three feet from the green's edge.

*In our next edition we will look more at preparations and applications of hollow tining over the autumn months.*



*Local Favourite, Kieran Earls, pitches towards the first green during the National Matchplay Championships at Parteen. Kieran was one of six competitors defeated by John Walsh over the three days of the June Bank Holiday.*

# COUNTY STROKEPLAY ROUND-UP

By Jason O'Connor

## Carlow/Kilkenny/Wexford

St Patrick's dominated the Senior Gents grade at the Regional Championships held at Bagenalstown. Martin O'Neill was the clear winner from club-mate William Hudson after shooting rounds off 11 and nine under par respectively for a 20 under par score. Hudson was nine behind at the end on 11 under in a one-two for the Enniscorthy club. The Intermediate Gents belonged to the host club however as Roy O'Neill won his first Regional Strokeplay with a score of nine under, two ahead of last year's National Junior Gents Strokeplay Runner-Up Patrick Robinson on seven under par. Darren McNally's winning score of eight under par in the Junior Gents would have given him second in the Intermediate as he had a total of eight shots to spare over St Patricks Aidan O'Brien in second. In the Ladies Nett section Marion Kinsella from the hosts came first ahead of Marie Power from Gowran while JP Kelly was the winner of the Over 55's Section.

## Clare

In the Senior Gents, the top two shot identical rounds in both their 36 holes. Martin Fawl from the hosts Clare Road began with a nine under par round for his first 18, two ahead of club-mate Declan Sheedy on seven under. Both matched these scores in the second 18's meaning Martin had an eventual four shot winning margin over Declan on 18 under par as opposed to 14 under. Fourteen under was the winning score in the Intermediate Gents as two rounds of seven under gave Cill Na Mona's Ger Hanrahan a two shot win over club-mate Martin Walsh. Martin had the best 18 hole round of the day on 11 under par to go with a one under total for his first 18 holes. The Junior Gents was dominated by Clare Road with rounds of five and four under par giving Kevin Woods a winning score of nine under par, four ahead of runner-up Jerry Kearse who shot a Second Round of five under to go with a level par opening.

## Dublin

Only the Ladies events (sponsored by Eamonn Birchall) took place in Portmarnock on the Saturday with the senior title going to one of the club's most famous exports. Geraldine Ward took advantage of the pristine condition of the course to win by six shots from Irish International Challenge Captain Maree O'Toole with a 36 hole total of 11 under par. Maree shot five under par. The Intermediate Ladies prize went to RGSC's Glenda Hoey with four over par that was seven shots better than Lucan's Sandra Keogh in second. The Junior competition was the closest of the three as Kathleen Condon from Old County's total of 123 was just two shots better than Glenville PRO Christine Mulvey's total in second. The Gents competitions will take place on the weekend of July 5th/6th in Erin's Isle.

## Kildare

The Kildare County Board Strokeplay Championships (sponsored by Bardon's Pub, Kilcullen) took place at the St. Bridget's club in Kilcullen. First out (in a horrible misty rain) were the senior gents and ladies. After 18 holes, Willie Fitzgerald of Ryston had the clubhouse lead on nine under. Willie didn't stop there and recorded a superb second round of 42 under to lead on 21 under - leaving everyone else playing for second! He added a further seven to his score in the Final 18 to finish on 28 under par, nine shots clear of club-mate Sean Harkins in second on 19 under. In the Ladies section it was really a case of who would come out on top between Chrissie and Marian Byrne. Marian lead by two after a first round 49, Chrissie however, came back with a second round 48 to clinch the title by three shots as Marian could only return a second 18 of 53. The gents Inter section provided another very high standard of play. Owen Farrell of St. Bridget's was the winner with a total of 11 under par to claim a four shot victory from John Redmond of Athgarvan who (on a score of seven under par) beat Christy Hannon on the back 18 for second. The Ladies Inter section went to a three-hole playoff after Martina Loakman (St. Bridget's) and Catherine Smith of Ryston had returned identical scores for their first two rounds. Martina prevailed in the playoff to claim the title. The Ladies Junior title was won by Teresa O'Keeffe of Ryston. There was a great entry in the Gents Junior section and an incredible Second Round of 45 (nine under - including 10 birdies and a bogey) from Mickey Norton of Ryston secured the title with a score of 99. Mickey's victory was all the more remarkable as he had begun the day with a triple bogey six on the first! Declan Mulpeter of Ryston finished second.



*Chrissie Byrne*

## Kerry

Played in Tralee, the four competitions were shared two apiece amongst both Deerpark and the hosts. The competitions also produced one of their biggest turnouts in recent years. Jonathon Goodall from the host club successfully defended his Senior Gents title with a fine total of 16 under par for 36 holes. That total included a second round total of 11 under par that was good enough for a four shot victory over Listowel's Declan McCarron in second. McCarron's total of 12 under par was two better than Tony Blake's in third on 10 under. Interestingly the top three all played in the same group on the day. The Intermediate Gents prize went to Deerpark with an in-form Jason O'Brien's total of 11 under par just about giving him a one shot victory over Jason Cregan in second on 10 under. The prizes in the Junior Gents competition went to Tralee with Roger Guthrie's three under par total giving him a six shot win over County Secretary David Hobbert in second. The Ladies competition (over 18 holes) was won by Deerpark's Betty O'Brien as she defeated club member Sheila O'Donoghue by three shots to retain a title that she had won on home turf the year before.

## Limerick

The Senior Gents competition had a very dramatic finish in Ardnacrusha with the title decided over a playoff between Bruff duo Liam O'Donovan and Pacelli Darcy. The latter produced a hole-in-one at the final playoff hole to defeat O'Donovan after both had finished on 23 under par after the regulation 54 holes. Kieran Earls from Parteen was third on 22 under. The Junior competition produced the novelty of the winning score being better than that of the Intermediate competition. Bruff's John Farrell shot a 10 under par score to finish six ahead of club-mate Michael Farrell in second. Charleville's Dean Curtin was the winner of the Intermediate competition with a score of seven under par, five ahead of Shane Maher from Parteen in second on two under.

## Louth/Down/Monaghan

A very overcast day greeted all the players from Louth/Down/Monaghan region. The Strokeplay venue was the beautifully presented course of Mc Bride in Drogheda. First to finish was the Junior Gents in which 36 holes couldn't separate the leaders forcing a nine hole playoff, which saw top-class Pitch & Putt witnessed. Local player Barry Dyas came out on top from Cement's Barry Walker after the extra holes. Second into the clubhouse were the Inter Gents with some high quality play as well. Local player and local favourite Keith Smyth triumphed from his sparring buddy and McBride club member Peter Woods. Keith posted an ultra-consistent winning score of 94 (47+47). After some outstanding play in the Ladies section it was the turn of Seapoint pair Noeleen Bedford (Senior) and Valerie Barren (Inter) to come out on top, both displaying superb play to win. Then came the Senior Gents, which saw the standard increase to an even higher level. Shane Redmond was out in the second group and he posted 11 under to lead after the first round. In his second round, Shane started powerfully with five birdies in the first nine, followed up again with seven birdies in the back nine to finish his second round with a course equalling round of 42. That produced a score of 23 under, which was not to be caught and brought Shane his first County Championship with a six shot winning margin over Owen Smith from the host club.



*Shane Redmond*

## Meath

The weather was cloudy and calm at the Gaeil Colmcille club in Kells for the 2014 Meath Strokeplay Championships. The course conditions were very soft, which made for receptive greens and low scoring. In the senior gents event Stackallen's Patrick McBride fired a 46 opening round for a one stroke lead over Ian Farrelly and Eamon Gibney. McBride made six birdies in-a-row from the 9th in a second round 44 and his eighteen under par tally of 90 secured a comfortable victory. Recently crowned Irish Open champion Eamon Gibney of Castletown was a gallant second, five strokes back after 47+48 for 95. A phenomenal second round of 43 gave new Inter champion, Bellewstown's Colin Byrne, a 16 under par aggregate of 92 and a two shot win over local man Ted Tighe, who also carded a brilliant 43 second time round. Chris Leavy (Gaeil Colmcille) fired 102 for a three shot junior winning margin from Navan pair John Cunningham and Alan Leddy. 2014 Ladies champions from a small but select entry were Kathleen Geraghty (Skyrne) in the Senior event and Phyllis Reilly (Stackallen) in the Intermediate competition. The Meath County Board would like to thank Noreen Myles for the kind event sponsorship.



## Offaly

There were five competitions played in the Faithful County this year with Tullamore the hosts. The Senior Gents and Senior Ladies competitions went to the brother and sister duo of Joe and Tracey McGrath from Erry. In the 54 hole Gents competition, Joe's total of 24 under par was just one better than Mick Hogan from the hosts club on 23. The Senior Ladies was another battle between the McGrath's and Hogan's as Tracey defeated Margaret Hogan by six shots to win the Ladies with a score of eight under par. Sean O'Connor matched Joe's score to win the Intermediate competition with a total of 24 as well. That was three shots better than former National Junior Gents Strokeplay Champion Aengus Coughlan in second. Ronnie O'Shea was victorious for the host club in the Junior Gents with a score of 13 under par, four better than club-mate Liam Huson in second. Lauren Pyke of Tullamore won the 7-18 Ladies section.

## Waterford

Eddie Hennessy was the party spoiler for Cunnigar as he prevented them claiming a clean sweep of the titles on offer as they hosted this year's Waterford Strokeplay Championships. His 14 under par total was two better than John Carroll's total of 12 to claim the Senior Gents title. The Intermediate Gents title was won by Aidan O'Rourke with a score of seven under par while Aiden Ryan was the Junior Gents winner with a level par score. Lorraine Troy was the winner of the Intermediate Ladies competition while Breda Foley claimed the Junior Ladies title.

## Westmeath

Another competition that needed a playoff was the Westmeath Senior Gents Strokeplay (played at Collinstown) where Custume's Pat Malone defeated Collinstown member and Dutch native Rene Jan Bloem after the extra nine holes. Both had finished level on 20 under par after the regulation 54 holes. The Intermediate and Junior Gents were both won by Collinstown members however. Gary Middleton's total of 22 under par (for 54) gave him a seven shot winning margin over Custume's Sean Langdon. In the Junior meanwhile David Penrose was the winner with 10 under par, four shots better than Lough Owel's Allan Foxe in second.

Tipperary's County Strokeplay had to be unfortunately called off due to adverse weather while the Gents in both Cork and Dublin takes place on the first weekend in July (5th/6th) in Rosscarbery and Erin's Isle respectively. Cork's Ladies do battle in Collins on June 22nd.

Thanks to all County/Regional Board PRO's who assisted the Sub-Committee in the compilation of these reports.

# **LADIES SOCIAL DAY A CONTINUING SUCCESS**

The Ladies Social Day for 2014 took place at St. Bridget's on a changeable mid April Saturday. Approximately 115 ladies from all over the country participated in the event, a randomised scramble draw, played over 36 holes. Conditions improved as the day went on in what was mostly a wonderful day for Pitch and Putt, especially considering the time of year.

The competition was played in a most sporting and friendly manner, with many players only meeting their playing partners for the first time on the day. The top three teams all came from the second session, which arguably had the better of the conditions. Noeleen Bedford, Mary Coyle (both Seapoint), Stella Kinsella (Cunnigar) and Laura Murphy (Ringcommons) took the top honour with a score of 65 1/2. The all Ringcommons team of Marie Sheils, Ann Duffy and Irene Lynch came second with a score of 70 2/3. With a score of 74, third prize was taken by an all Cork team of Catherine Waters, Ailish Sexton (both Fermoy) and Frances Murphy (Kilshannig).

More importantly, all competitors enjoyed the day and most headed to the Hideout in Kilcullen afterwards for a post event meal where all the talk was of a probable second event later in the year.

The PPUI would like to thank the participating ladies and spectators for travelling from all over the country. Many thanks also are due to St. Bridget's as always for their excellent hospitality.

# COURSE PROFILES: FERMOY AND STACKALLEN

By John Manning

We cast an eye back to previous National Championships/Events at the National Strokeplay venues.

## Fermoy

Fermoy Pitch and Putt club was formed in the early 1970s. It is now a wonderfully mature parkland course, its fairways liberally guarded by tall trees. The course boasts many extra greens and tees enabling the local Committee to vary the layout to suit the occasion. The annual Fermoy Open at the beginning of August is a must for players from all over Ireland.

Fermoy course lies in the heart of the town of Fermoy, a vibrant north Cork community. Close by are Gaelic pitches and squash courts in a show of sporting ecumenism.

It was first honoured by the Central Council of the P.P.U.I. in 1976 when the National Ladies Matchplay came to north Cork on June 19/20. In the semi-finals, Clare Keating (Woodvale) beat Margaret Hogan (Clara) and Joan Coughlan (Fermoy) defeated Mildred Doyle (Shandon). Into the final then – an all Cork final. Hopes were high of a local win but Clare took the second to last of her eight titles by 8&7.

The National Mixed Foursomes was played in Fermoy on 7 October 1979. The laurels stayed at home with a famous Fermoy family. Joe and Patricia Kearney won with a score of 16 up.

On 6 September 1981, Ann Ginnane (St. Anne's) shot a superb 94 to spread-eagle the field in the National Ladies Strokeplay. Margaret Hogan was runner-up on 99.

The National Ladies Strokeplay Championships returned to Cork on 30 June 1985. In a very close finish, Marie Allen (St. Anne's) tied with Margaret Hogan (Tullamore) on 99. A fantastic four under 23 in the play-off secured Marie's first title.

John and Marie Mahony (R.G.S.C.) won the John Player Mixed Foursomes final at Fermoy on 27 September 1987. Their score was 17 up.

Dublin, inspired by John Rogers' mighty 88 shot 390 to pip Cork by one shot in the Juvenile Inter-County championship at Fermoy on August 22nd 1992. The following day, Ronan Walsh (Tralee) won a Boys Championship marked by some

superb scoring. Ronan's 91 was one ahead of Declan O'Brien of Taylor's Hill. St. Bridget's Marian Byrne was foiled of a second successive Girls title in a play-off with Sharon Bowes of the host club. 22 years later both will be competing for the Senior Ladies title at the venue.

Liam O'Brien (Douglas) survived a First Round scare against Liam McGarry (C.Y.M.C./L.C.) to reach the National Matchplay final at Fermoy on June 7th 1993 and beat Johnny Campbell (Cement) by 5 and 4.

In an International Challenge at Fermoy on September 25th 1994, Ireland (Sean Downes, Derek Courtney, Ray Murphy, John Walsh, Francie Leech and Cathal Dunne) beat Australia, 815 to 940.

The second National Mixed Team Event final was played at Fermoy on May 21st 1995. Collins shot 183 points to win by four from Templebreedy.

Niall Cuffe (Kilbeggan) holed an eight foot uphill putt on the final green to win the Paddy Old Irish Whiskey Gent's National Strokeplay Championship by a single stroke in ideal scoring conditions at Fermoy on July 4th 1999. Niall's 54 hole aggregate of 132 (that's 30 under par and a new championship scoring aggregate record) gave him victory by one over gallant runner-up Derry McCarthy (Deerpark).

Cork's domination of the All Ireland Juvenile Inter-County championship continued in mostly sunny and warm conditions at Fermoy on August 19th 2000. Cork took the Tommy Murphy Cup for the fifth time in a row and the ninth time in all with a stunning 57 under par aggregate of 375 (a championship record). The following day, Hazel Hanrahan of the host club Fermoy carded two steady rounds of 58 to win the Coca Cola Irish Girls Strokeplay Championship. Jason McNamara (Hillview) won the National Boy's Strokeplay championship with a cumulative 36 hole total of 88 (20 under par).

The National Mixed Team Event final was back at Fermoy on 24 August 2003. Victory went to the Lucan quartet on 157 points, two ahead of St. Bridget's with Templebreedy another shot back in third.

Ray Murphy and Chrissie Byrne won the 2006

National Matchplay Championships at Fermoy. This was the start of Ray's four-in-a-row run while this was the second of Chrissie's four Matchplay titles to date.

## **Stackallen**

The Hill of Slane is a famous landmark in Ireland's North East. It is where St. Patrick (who brought Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century) first came when he arrived in Ireland. It is told that he lit up a huge fire on the top of the hill to get attention. Slane Castle sits atop the hill at the site for the internationally renowned one day festival that is Slane.

It is a unique and special venue and has been the witness to many of the finest musical acts and performers ever. Acts of the stature of U2, Madonna, Robbie Williams, Bruce Springsteen, Queen and the Rolling Stones have played Slane since 1984.

Just a couple of miles from Slane on the road to Navan lies Stackallen Lawn Tennis and Pitch & Putt Club. The club offers unrivalled facilities in both sports, along with a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the Clubhouse lounge and Function Room.

Stackallen is a progressive and social club and extends an invitation to all prospective members and visitors, private and corporate, to come, view and sample the Stackallen experience.

Stackallen club enjoys an excellent relationship with Pitch and Putt in Catalonia. A group from the club regularly travels to Calella and plays a number of the local courses. Stackallen members have competed with distinction in ACPP domestic and international Opens.

The National Ladies Strokeplay championships were played in Stackallen in 1984. The senior championship was fought out by two players from the host county. Pauline Whelan (Royal Meath), later to be Leinster Council Secretary fired a five under par 103 to pip clubmate Peg Duffy by a single stroke. Philomena Murphy (Rocklodge) carded 110 to win the intermediate championship while fellow Cork player Mary O'Donovan (Collins) took the junior on 118.

A huge Stackallen gallery along with the Pitch and Putt world hailed a new All Ireland Strokeplay champion in July 2001. John Cahill (Fermoy), who was fifth at Lakeside in 2000 and represented Ireland against the Catalans in 2002, fired a brilliant 45 final round for a 22 under par aggregate of 140 to win by a single shot from Ray

Murphy. 1997 champion John Walsh (Collins) chipped-in at the final hole for birdie to edge out Athgarvan's Eddie Carey for third place on the final 18, 46 to 47. The pair had tied on 144.

Stackallen was bathed in sunny warm conditions for the 2003 National Mixed Foursomes final on 28 September (sponsored by Brophy Builders Blessington). The main awards resulted in a clean sweep for home county pairs. Meath Inter-County players, Ian Farrelly (Duleek) and Catherine McCreevy (Navan) carded +11 to take the Sean Coyne Memorial Trophy by a single shot from the fast finishing host club pairing Patrick McBride and Eileen Heavey. The Best Gross was won by another low handicap duo from Meath - Colin Somers (Stackallen) and Ann Hall (Royal Meath), who recorded an eight up gross aggregate. Stackallen's course was a credit to Sean Downes, who finished joint fourth on his debut in the event, alongside his wife Audrey.

Stackallen hosted the National Matchplay championships in 2007. On the June Bank Holiday Monday that year, Ray Murphy completed the second of his historic four-in-a-row run from 2006-2009 at the Meath venue to emulate both Joe Doyle and Sean Harkins achievements. Ger Ward meanwhile won her eighth Ladies title to go level at that point with the legendary Claire Keating on the Roll of Honour.

The course features many highlights but the uphill 70 metre 4th hole (Stroke Index One on the Stackallen card) is a really tough one. Both bunkers are in play and a putt from anywhere other than below the hole is devilishly difficult. Hole No. 7 (34 metres with a flat green) is Index 18 on the Stackallen card. Many bogeys are made at the tricky 10th where the bunker short is probably the most frequently visited on the course. The toughest stretch of the course is undoubtedly the back nine. Most of the outward holes are played uphill while many of the inward run make holding the greens difficult as the teeshot is invariably downhill.

***The Ladies Championship takes place in Fermoy on the Saturday 19th (Inter & Junior) and Sunday 20th (Senior) of July.***

***The Gents take centre stage the following week in Stackallen on Saturday 26th (Inter and Junior) and Sunday 27th (Senior) of July.***

***Best of luck to all involved over the two weekends.***



# INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE vs CATALONIA

By Jason O'Connor

After two days of action in Lloret Papalus, a brave Irish Challenge unfortunately just came up short in the International Challenge with Catalonia as the host nation won only their second such Challenge against Ireland since the event's inception back in 1997. The 12 strong Irish team that departed was unique in its make-up as it featured a team of debutants that had never worn the Irish jersey before. They also represented nine counties giving it a nice geographic make-up and also spanned more than five decades in the game in terms of their involvement. It also contained Juvenile players for the first time and the Union's two most recent winners of the National Boys Strokeplay title acquitted themselves very well as Conor McCarthy (Deerpark) and Shane Redmond (Channonrock) won all their points between the three formats played (Foursomes, Fourballs and Singles).

Their efforts brought in six points, just under three-fifths of the Irish total for the Challenge as they were successful over Catalan duo Marc Ibanyez and Jordi Torrecilla on each occasion. Team captain Maree O'Toole (Shandon) and Martha O'Brien (Lakeside) were victorious over the Catalan pair of Encarnacion Robelo and Nuria Dalmau in the Foursomes match at the last hole but lost their Fourball match with the same duo at the last hole as well in the afternoon. The combination of Weeshie Murphy (Raffeen Creek) and John Carton (Kilbeggan) halved their Foursomes match with Ricardo Betlinski and Salvador Moline but were defeated by the same duo 3&2 in the Fourballs later on Saturday. Clare duo Martin Fawl (Clare Road) and Helen Daly (Cill Na Mona) were defeated in both doubles formats by Abby Nachshon and Francisco Arevalo giving the Catalans the early advantage.

Kevin McCarthy (Rocklodge) and Ian Dillon (St Bridgets) enjoyed mixed fortunes against the Catalan pair of Marc Lloret and Josep Martinez in their two matches on Saturday. Kevin and Ian lost the Foursomes match 2&1 before going on to record a 3&2 victory in the Fourballs against the same duo. Frank Ryan (St Bridgets) and Christy Broe (Old County) didn't get any points from their two matches against Enric Sanz and Dani Gimenez, the Foursomes the closest match as Frank and Christy lost on the last hole before going on to lose by 5&3 in the Fourballs. That left Ireland trailing by 7.5 to 4.5 overnight and in need of a big overhaul in the Singles to turn matters around on Sunday.

Ultimately the Singles ended in a draw between the two sides with six matches match won by each team. As well as Conor (3&1) and Shane (4&3) there were wins for Weeshie (1up), John (4&3), Frank (4&3) and Kevin (1up) to bring Ireland's final points total to 10.5. Martha and Helen were both defeated at the final holes in their encounters as Maree, Christy, Martin and Ian were also defeated in their Singles encounter. Catalonia won their first Challenge since 2008 on a final score line of 13.5 to 10.5, a deserved success in a contest that was played in the right spirit throughout.

Despite the Irish defeat we commend the efforts of the team in Lloret Papalus for their country and also team manager Michael Murphy and assistant Mary Farrell for their work alongside the team both on the weekend itself as well as beforehand. It was great to see some members of the Union get a unique chance to represent their country in this format and represent the broad spectrum that PPUI membership incorporates. We all look forward to the next Challenge that will take place in the coming years.



*Weeshie Murphy (Raffeen Creek) pitches at Lloret Papalus during last weekend's International Challenge*

# IV IRISH INTERNATIONAL OPEN @ GLENVILLE

By Linda Thomson

As soon as it was announced that Glenville were successful in their bid to host the fourth Irish International Open, the troops were rounded up! A committee was formed to make sure no stone was left unturned in the preparations, these preparations started the year previous, so huge credit goes to all involved for their dedication throughout.

In the weeks leading up to the event, Glenville suffered vandalism to the course and parts of the building. These mindless people damaged the water tanker on two occasions, burned out the hut at the 8th and damaged at least six or seven greens sadly. However that was not going to deter the Glenville Army that had been set up well in advance. The dedication that was shown when the members patrolled the course 24/7 in the build-up was phenomenal. Kudos also goes to our "overseas members" namely the Dutch contingent. Two of them grabbed their jackets and torches and took up duty of patrolling our course.

Once the club overcame this setback, the buzz could be felt as soon as you walked into the grounds of Glenville in the week leading up to the event. Our Dutch members had arrived and were taking full advantage of having the course at their disposal and could always be seen around the course practicing, and playing "skins" with the local members. No one's quite sure who won or lost, but the banter could be heard all around the course.

Personally I was really looking forward to it following the launch on Good Friday, plus having witnessed all the work being put in by the members I knew the course would be a treat to play on that weekend. For me however, my journey to play on one of the biggest tournaments my club could host was cut short, literally the day before the event. Disappointment was an understatement, but either way, I would be present the whole weekend to help out where I could, and watch the players battle it out for the crown...

The first Three Ball kicked off proceedings at 8.30am on the Saturday. As the players rolled in to register, and the cups of tea were flying, people were chatting, the buzz of Pitch and Putt was back. The weather (at this stage) was playing its part also! As the morning went on, the clouds started to come fast over the Dublin Mountains and t-shirts were soon replaced with jumpers, then the rain-gear! Mother Nature was not going to be kind to the players or the course and she spoke volumes with the heavy downpours.

The early scores and leaders coming in had posted scores of -6, ladies leader on -5, but this was only early days, a couple of -8's arrived in. It meant it was all going to hinge on the Second Round and also on how the players would manage with the gusting wind and torrential downpours! The early leaders started early in the afternoon for the Second Round and some added to their scores to throw them in the mix for Sunday. The weather got worse as the afternoon went on and the players who had later times were unfortunately the ones to bear the brunt of this! The grounds staff were also on hand evaluating the course to see how it was holding. At 6.30pm play had to be suspended with many players only half way around. Glenville had succumbed to Mother Nature and she was going to win this one! We now had to wait till the play resumed on the Sunday morning to find out who the clear leaders would be...

Play resumed at 8.30am on the Sunday morning with players finishing of their Second Round. At last when completed, we now had our leaders. The Ladies were all tied on -5 each, so this was going to be a battle over the Last 18, as all three girls played in different groups. Eamon Gibney, Alan Hanlon and John Walsh would be the last Three Ball on the course that afternoon. With only a shot between Eamon and Alan, it was going to be nip-and-tuck. However the other players in close contention also started off well, and at one stage there was only a total of three shots separating the six players in the final two groups approaching the last nine holes. The Ladies were so close all the way to the end and only one shot separated the winner and runner-up. Marian Byrne was Irish Open Champion beating defending champion, Tracey McGrath.

On the turn Eamon was still in front, but Liam O'Donovan in the group ahead was making a full charge with Eamon's lead starting to come under pressure. Eamon calmly (well looked it anyway) tipped



along, and with a few birdies in a row, he had picked up some shots and was now clear leader. It was evident with his pitch to about 2 feet on the 18th that this was one tournament he seemed destined to win. By the time the last Three Ball had finished and we knew the winners, the sun had come back out to play, better late than never I guess.

The committee had one last job to do. Check all the cards, and then declare the Ladies and Gents winners of the fourth Irish International Open and then kick back in the bar where many a sing song had taken place over the weekend to have a well-deserved drink!

Glenville would like to thank all the sponsors we had, the committee who organised it, and all the players who took part in making it a success. Next time, we will have a word with Mother Nature.....

#### **IV Irish International Open: 10th & 11th of May**

##### **Results:**

##### **Gents**

Winner: Eamon Gibney (Castletown): -25

(Opposite with Club Captain, Paddy Murphy)

Second: Liam O'Donovan (Bruff): -22

Third: Alan Hanlon (Collinstown): -20



##### **Ladies**

Winner: Marian Byrne (St Bridget's): -6

(Opposite with Club Captain, Doris Weldon)

Second: Tracey McGrath (Erry): -5

Third: Margaret Hogan (Tullamore): -1



##### **Over 55's**

Winner: Pacelli Darcy (Bruff): -12

(Opposite with Club Captain, Paddy Murphy)

Second: Anthony Malone (Lucan): -9





## MAJOR UPCOMING FIXTURES AND DATES TO REMEMBER

- June 22nd:** Provincial Graded Handicap Strokeplay Qualifiers
- June 29th:** National Strokeplay Championships Qualifiers
- July 9th:** National and Provincial Under 16 Strokeplay Championships - Closing Dates  
National and Provincial Under 16 Inter County Championships - Closing Dates
- July 13th:** Leinster Ladies Graded Handicap Strokeplay Finals @ Lucan  
Leinster Gents Graded Handicap Strokeplay Finals @ Cloghogue (Senior) and Inniskeen  
Munster Ladies Graded Handicap Strokeplay Finals @ Ballinlough  
Munster Gents Graded Handicap Strokeplay Finals @ Douglas
- July 19th:** National Ladies Strokeplay Finals @ Fermoy (Intermediate and Junior)  
**July 20th:** National Ladies Strokeplay Finals @ Fermoy (Senior)
- July 26th:** National Gents Strokeplay Finals @ Stackallen (Intermediate and Junior)  
**July 27th:** National Gents Strokeplay Finals @ Stackallen (Senior)
- Aug 8th:** Leinster Under 16 Inter County @ McBride  
**Aug 9th:** Leinster Under 16 Strokeplay @ McBride  
Munster Under 16 Strokeplay @ Tipperary Hills
- Aug 10th:** Leinster Ladies and Gents Inter County @ Collinstown  
Munster Ladies, Gents and Under 16 Inter County @ Tipperary Hills
- Aug 16/17th:** Provincial Intermediate and Junior Inter County

### PRODUCTION TEAM FOR THIS ISSUE

Jason O'Connor (Editor), Linda Thomson, Paul O'Brien, John Manning and Pauric Buggy.

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Our next edition (late August) will reflect on those events mentioned in the introduction along with the Provincial Strokeplays in July, the Provincial Inter-Counties across all grades as well as some of our Juvenile events. We will also look ahead to the National Inter-County in Tullamore in our next edition. Anyone with any items of interest for future editions is more than welcome to contact me on either the number or email address below.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the NEC for their support and assistance thus far in this role along with Michael, Pauric and Anne in the office for their help as well.

Until next time,

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