

It's really unusual for the holder of the National Gents Junior Strokeplay title to play in the championship the following year.

However, **Pat Sheehan** (St. Anne's) will have the privilege of attempting to go back-to-back at Kilbeggan and repeat last year's runaway success at St. Anne's.

Adding further novelty to the 2026 renewal is the presence of 2025 runner-up **William Fitzgerald** (Fermoy). Impressive winner of last Monday's Fermoy Scratch Cup, William is drawn in the final group of the morning session alongside 2026 National Matchplay semi-finalist **Paul Boreham** (Bishopstown).

2013 Munster Strokeplay bronze medallist **Chris O'Donovan** (Collins) will seek to emulate his nephew Callum who triumphed at R.G.S.C. in 2024. Chris will have an opportunity to set the early pace from 09.24 in the company of **Michael Cunningham**, who helped Kilbeggan quartets to runners-up spots in the 1991 Carrolls Club Tournament and in the 2007 National Mixed Team Event.

Michael is one of two home club representatives. The other is **Lee Stynes**, the 2013 Westmeath Matchplay champion. Lee's fellow competitor will be 2025 National Over-55s Junior grade Strokeplay champion **Brendan Moloney** (Ardnacrusha).

2026 Gowran Scratch Cup winner **Michael Maher** (Bagenalstown) played all four rounds last year at St. Anne's and finished eighth.

Richie Walsh (Rathfeigh) was a Leinster Matchplay runner-up in 2018 and a session prize winner in the 2023 National Scotch Foursomes.

Richie Walsh is quickly followed by Rathfeigh club colleague and 2019 Leinster Strokeplay runner-up **Raymond Fay**, a provincial Scotch Foursomes winner in 2022.

Ciaran McCormack (Loughlinstown) claimed the Best final 18 prize in the recent Leinster Strokeplay championship at Laytown, having a provincial Junior B bronze medallist a couple of years ago.

Ken Butler (Loughlinstown) won the 2026 Dublin John Smith Junior Scratch Cup and reached the capital's Junior Matchplay final.

Fifth in this championship three years ago, **Michael O'Donoghue** (Tipperary Hills) was a 2022 Munster Strokeplay silver medallist.

Paddy Barry (St. Anne's) finished third in the recent National Over-55s Junior grade Strokeplay championship. Paddy joins reigning Leinster Junior Strokeplay **Glenn Fortune** (St. Patrick's) on the first tee. Glenn was also crowned provincial Junior Matchplay champion back in 2016, the year he added a third place finish in the National Junior Strokeplay championship.

2023 National Scotch Foursomes victor **David Moran** (Royal Meath) tees up with 2023 Loughlinstown Scratch Cup winner **John Boyle** (Loughlinstown), who has contended in a number of Scratch Cups this season.

Tommy Lacey (Custume) claimed the Best Last 18 award at the recent Paddy Carton Memorial Scratch Cup at Kilbeggan.

Ken Hickey (Bagenalstown) has been a provincial Junior Inter-County bronze medallist with Carlow.

2019 Leinster Mixed Foursomes winner and this year's provincial Matchplay semi-finalist **John Gilsenan** (Trim) features alongside **Paul Walsh** (Collins), winner of the Munster Matchplay in 2024, the year he reached the National Matchplay quarter-finals.

2026 Shandon Scratch Cup winner **Jonny McKee** (Cloghogue) is in the field as is his clubmate **Neil Barr**, a 2025 National Inter-County runner-up with Down.

2022 Munster Strokeplay bronze medallist **Rick Harty** (Ardnacrusha) plays with **Gerry White** (Athgarvan), who finished runner-up in the recent Paddy Carton Memorial Scratch Cup at Kilbeggan.

2022 National Intermediate Inter-County winner with Cork and multiple Leaside County champion, **Robbie Donovan** (Fermoy) is confronted by 2024 Offaly Matchplay runner-up **Kieran Claffey** (Erry).

2025 Cork Strokeplay runner-up **Tom Cantwell** (ESB) partners last year's Munster Juvenile Strokeplay runner-up **Nicholas O'Toole** (Larkspur Park).

Simon Drummey helped Cunnigar to second spot in last year's National Inter-Club tournament while **David Harnett** (Deerpark) reached the 2026 National Matchplay semi-finals at Rocklodge.

A couple of top ex-juveniles with chances are 2024 Munster Boys Plate runner-up **Luke Ryan** (Tipperary Hills) along with 2024 National Intermediate Matchplay semi-finalist and 2013 National Juvenile Inter-County winner with Cork, **Ryan Walsh** (Collins).

Alan Walsh (Bagenalstown) was a 2022 Leinster Matchplay semi-finalist while **Paul Hayes** (Listowel) claimed third slot in the 2023 Munster Junior B Strokeplay championship.

The last player of the 80 into action will be 2025 Munster Strokeplay runner-up **Ian Murphy** (Claycastle).

With no past National Gents Junior Strokeplay history to draw from, players should probably be aiming in the region of 151, which made a 9-hole play-off for the Leinster Junior Strokeplay championship in 2001.