

PITCH & PUTT IRELAND



Leinster Matchplay Finals 2026

May 9th & 10th

Official Venues

McDonagh Pitch and Putt

St. Bridget's Pitch and Putt

Championship Previews by John Manning

Gents Senior Preview

Holder **Stephen Murray** (Old County) and 2024 champion **Eamon Gibney** (Castletown) fought out a tense and exciting battle in last year's Leinster Matchplay final at Navan.

And that pair could meet in the 2026 decider again with Gibney in the top half of the draw and Murray in the last match out. Gibney must first deal with Tullamore's **Paul Lowry** who was crowned intermediate champion at Navan twelve months ago while Murray (fresh off a recent course record 39 at Old County) is opposed by 2020 Irish Open champion **Pat Malone** (Custume).

Other stiff opposition to three-time provincial Strokeplay runner-up Gibney in the top quarter is likely to come from **Ian Dillon** (St. Bridget's), who defeated Stephen Murray in the 2023 Leinster Matchplay final at St. Patrick's and a rejuvenated **Andrew Lowe** (Old County) who was a National Matchplay quarter-finalist in millennium year.

A humdinger of a first round encounter sees eight-time Dublin individual champion **Chris Gallagher** (Lucan) take on 2016 National Strokeplay runner-up **Darren O'Connell** (Tullamore). The winner of that confrontation will tackle whoever comes through the **Mark Newman** v. **Patrick Robinson** skirmish. 2014 Leinster Schools winner Newman is a royal achiever in Scratch Cups while 2022 Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay runner-up Robinson reached the 2023 provincial Intermediate Matchplay semi-finals.

2024 National Strokeplay bronze medallist **Edward Hennessy** (Tramore) has made the switch from Munster to Leinster look easy as he faces a match against 2018 Leinster Matchplay winner **Aengus Coughlan** (Tullamore).

John Ross Crangle opens up against **Declan Mulpeter** (Ryston) as the Loughlinstown man bids for a first title since 2015 but a fifth in all. Four-time Leinster Inter-County winner **Ian Farrelly** (Laytown) has been in impressive early season Scratch Cup form as he anticipates an all-Royal County battle with the most decorated juvenile of all time, 2022 Irish Open champ **Evan Carry** (Castletown).

Last year's Leinster Strokeplay runner-up **Karl Murphy** (Old County) confronts two-time National Over-55 Strokeplay bronze medallist **Tadgh Harrington** (Rathfeigh).

Jim Judge (MacBride) has been runner-up in both the Leinster and Munster Matchplay championships. He would love to lift the Leinster Matchplay crown as would former provincial Strokeplay champions **George McGreal** (Old County) and **Darren Fagan** (Seapoint).

Ladies Senior Preview

Chrissie Sheedy's record in the Leinster Matchplay is simply awesome. The Ryston star begins her campaign for a third title in a row and a record-extending 13th in all as she plays **Helen Greagsbey** (Ierne) in a repeat of the 2019 decider at Trim, won narrowly by Chrissie. Helen was also intermediate runner-up in 2017. Chrissie won the provincial Strokeplay at McDonagh in 2017.

Dublin Inter-County players **Tracey Smith** (Lucan) and **Pauline Balfe** (Old County) are drawn in the next match. Pauline was intermediate champion at Inniskeen in 2018 while the pair both hold Leinster Inter-County winners medals.

Four-time champion **Marian Courtney** (Ryston) has already won the championship previously at McDonagh. That was in 2002 while her first round opponent **Liz Quinn** (Collinstown) is a two-time runner-up. The pair met in the final three years ago at St. Patrick's when Marian was victorious.

Last year's runner-up **Glenda Hoey** (Lucan) was 2019 Leinster Strokeplay champion, a title Glenda's first round adversary **Paula Lynch** (Oldcastle) claimed in 2023.

Four-time winner **Geraldine Ward** (Portmarnock) and Tullamore's **Margaret Hogan**, victorious in 1983 and in 1985, renew their age-old rivalry. The pair have clashed many, many times including the 1984 National Matchplay final and the 1989 provincial Matchplay showpiece.

Margaret Keogh (Ryston) lifted the 2017 Leinster Intermediate Matchplay trophy while **Louise Grace** (R.G.S.C.) is a Leinster Inter-County winner with Dublin.

Twelve-time provincial Inter-County winner **Maree O'Toole** (Shandon), who was National Over-55s senior grade runner-up in 2018 at McDonagh plays Oldcastle's **Margaret Reilly**, the 2022 Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay runner-up.

At the bottom of the draw, multiple Leinster Girls Strokeplay champion and 2024 National Matchplay winner **Amy Galvin** (Tullamore) plays 2012 Leinster Strokeplay runner-up **Siobhan Keely** (Lucan).

Gents Intermediate Preview

Peadar O'Toole (Athgarvan) will hope to make the quick jump from Leinster Junior Matchplay success (at Navan last year) to provincial intermediate glory at McDonagh but first he will have to deal with fellow Kildare player, Ryston's **Jason Moore**, the 2023 National Strokeplay bronze medallist.

Reigning Leinster Junior Strokeplay champion **Paul Core** (Bagenalstown) is up against Old County's **Paul County**, who placed third in the 2025 Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay.

Another all-Kildare clash brings together **Ollie Lambe** (Athgarvan), the 2025 County Matchplay champion and Ryston's **Colin English**, the 2025 National Junior B Strokeplay kingpin.

Like Peadar O'Toole, **Jack McShane** is a former leading juvenile now making his way in the adult ranks. Crowned Leinster Boys champion three years in a row (2022-2024), the Gowran man is faced by 2022 National Junior Strokeplay champion **Glen Martin** (Killineer).

The winner of that one will meet either Ireland's successful European Team championship captain **Paddy Kelly** (Trim) or **Danny Kilduff**, a member of the famous Lucan Pitch and Putt family.

A man brimful of Inter-County experience, **Noel Comiskey Junior** (Kilbeggan) takes on 2026 Dublin Matchplay runner-up **David Crum** (Portmarnock).

Glen Martin's dad, **Gel Martin** is also in the field but father and son can't meet until the semi-final. For that to be a possibility, the 2003 and 2006 main Leinster Inter-County winner from Killineer must overcome Tramore's **Brian Farrell**, a main Munster Inter-County runner-up with Waterford in 2016 before winning National Division B with the Déise a year later.

That was a feat also achieved by **Ian Flynn** (Tramore) who plays **Paraig Kenny** (Eden), a man prominent on the Leinster Scratch Cup circuit, here.

The very popular Erry man, **Joe McGrath**, annexed four Leinster Mixed Foursomes titles along with a victory in the 2001 All Ireland Mixed Team Event. Joe will hope to capitalise on that knowhow against Killineer's **Gerard Thornton**, the 2023 National Intermediate Inter-County runner-up with Louth.

Gents Junior Preview

2024 Offaly Matchplay runner-up **Kieran Claffey** (Erry) will strike the first pitch of the junior championship. He will be joined on the first tee by **Gerald Murphy**, bidding to become the first Glenville winner since Keith Kershaw in millennium year.

The winner of that match will soon be tangling with with Lucan's **Alan Doyle** (Dublin Matchplay winner in 2023) or 2023 Leinster Strokeplay bronze medallist **John Gilsean** (Trim).

2025 Juvenile Inter-County winner with Carlow, **Brad Meehan** (Bagenalstown) has an All-Ireland juvenile Plate pedigree to propel him into his showdown with Ryston's **Neil Dunlea**, the 2024 Kildare Matchplay champion.

Carlow Inter-County player and proficient Scratch Cup performer **John Kelly** (Bagenalstown) is faced by Custume's **Enda Malone**, the reigning Westmeath Matchplay champion.

Leading Dublin qualifier **Manish Herpersad** (Portmarnock) plays Lucan's **Matthew Finlay**, a National Inter-Club semi-finalist in 2025.

Next up for them would be either the man with the famous Pitch and Putt name, **John Smith** (this one from Cloghogue and a National Scotch Foursomes silver medallist last year) or Tramore's **Jamie O'Mahony**.

Reigning Kildare Matchplay champion **Sam Murphy** (Athgarvan) is in the last match out, against Loughlinstown's **Ciaran McCormack**, Leinster Junior B Strokeplay bronze medallist two years ago.

The player coming through that opening round standoff will then face the winner between 2025 National Scotch Foursomes runner-up **Chris Cunningham** (Cloghogue) and **Edward Forester**, one of five Tramore members crossing into Leinster to contest the provincial Junior Matchplay championships

Ladies Intermediate Preview

Teresa Fagan (Royal Meath) was an impressive winner of the 2025 Leinster Intermediate Matchplay decider at Navan. **Susan Ritchie** was the defeated finalist on that occasion, the second such result for the R.G.S.C. lady inside three years.

Should Teresa and Susan progress this year, they will meet in the 2026 quarter-final. **Teresa** opens her title defence against **Annette Dowling** (Trim) while Susan is opposed by another Trim member **Margaret Conneely**. Annette Dowling was 2023 provincial Junior Strokeplay runner-up while Margaret Conneely won the 2019 Leinster Mixed Foursomes during a season when she also reached the provincial Intermediate Matchplay final.

Completing that extremely competitive top quarter are MacBride's **Audrey Donnelly** (three-time Leinster Junior Matchplay champion), 2025 semi-finalist **Marie Dooley** (R.G.S.C.), Cloghogue's **Maria Cranney** (who lifted the trophy at Erry two years ago) and 2006 Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay champion **Patricia McLoughlin** (Shandon).

Athgarvan's **Laura Fogarty** was All-Ireland Ladies Matchplay Nett Cup runner-up last year and has already been on the 2026 provincial podium in the Mixed Foursomes. Laura will play **Angela Connolly** (Eden) whom she beat in the 2025 Nett Cup semi-finals. Angela captured Best final 18 in the 2024 National Strokeplay championship.

Molly O'Toole (McDonagh) was a two-time Leinster Girls Matchplay champion while Bagenalstown's **Ann Hickey** has been a winner at St. Patrick's, Kildare and Offaly Scratch Cups already this season

Lucan's **Sandra Keogh** won the recent Dublin Matchplay at Shandon while her first round rival **Paula Weldon** (Trim) claimed the Meath equivalent at Oldcastle.

Bridie Kelly (Athgarvan) has been a factor in Leinster Strokeplay championships all the way back her 1988 win at Kilbeggan and lifted the 1990 Irish Intermediate Matchplay title. Fourth in the 2025 National Strokeplay championship, Bridie's clubmate **Rachel McNamara** has seen success in provincial Scotch Foursomes.

2024 Leinster Strokeplay runner-up **Marion Gannon Kelly** (Ryston) will take the experience of her 2024 All-Ireland Ladies Matchplay Nett Cup success into her local derby clash with 2015 Leinster Junior Strokeplay champion **Catherine Smith** (McDonagh). The first of seven ladies to receive a bye into the last sixteen, **Bronagh Crilly**, awaits the winner of that one. One of the new players that have taken Cloghogue club and the Pitch and Putt world by storm in recent years, Bronagh claimed last year's Leinster Strokeplay crown and narrowly failed to add the All-Ireland title at McDonagh.

Another of the current crop of capable Cloghogue players, **Karen McVerry** (last year's runner-up) will vie for a quarter-final spot with Royal Meath's **Elizabeth Maguire**, a provincial Inter-County Nett winner.

A quarter-final is also up for grabs between 2024 National Junior Strokeplay champion **Ashlene McKeivitt** (Cloghogue) and 2025 All Ireland Ladies Matchplay Nett Cup semi-finalist **Marie Clarke** (Poulaphouca).

Regular podium finisher at the Leinster Mixed Foursomes, **Bridie Cummins** (Trim) and 2024 Leinster Junior Strokeplay champion **Christina Foley** (Athgarvan) complete the line-up.

Ladies Junior Preview

To former Pitch and Putt Ireland Children's Officer **Catherine Keane** (Glenville) goes the honour of setting the junior championship in motion. Catherine's opponent on the day is Westmeath Inter-County player **Sinead Lynam** (Rochfortbridge).

That pair are quickly followed by Cloghogue's **Anne Jackson** (the 2024 Leinster Non-Mixed Foursomes runner-up and a 2025 provincial matchplay semi-finalist) and **Patricia Magill**. Patricia and her Glenville clubmate **Angela Raymond** were prominent in last year's GRIP Scramble, claiming second Nett overall.

Angela Raymond is challenged by **Nuala Stafford** (Stackallen), the 2022 National Over-55s junior grade Strokeplay Best Nett winner.

Another contributor to the Cloghogue ladies revolution is **Shirley Wells**, a member of Down's Leinster Inter-County Best Nett winning team last autumn. Shirley is opposed by Royal Meath's **Angela Egan**, Best Nett winner at the recent Royal Meath Scratch Cup.

Martina McCooey (Cloghogue) has been prominent at Pitch and Putt Ireland ladies social events while R.G.S.C.'s **Lorraine Duggan** is the reigning Dublin Matchplay champion. Three-time Leinster Mixed Foursomes winner **Catherine Dillon** (St. Bridget's) awaits the winner of the Down v. Dubs clash, in the quarter-final.

Also already through to the last eight are Royal Meath's **Rita O'Donovan** (the 2024 Meath Matchplay runner-up) and **Darlene Parr** (Cloghogue), a session winner at the 2024 Leinster Mixed Foursomes.