

GCH END OF YEAR TRACK & FIELD REVIEW 2019

GCH enjoyed a very successful 2018/'19 season overall. In this article – and the accompanying files and photos - you can catch up on some of the key aspects of our year:

- Significant Achievements
 - Cross Country
- Indoor & Outdoor Competitions
- Coaching & Summer Camp
 - New Athletes
- A 'Highlight' Table for each & every athlete who competed during the year
- A summary table of how GCH did at the Nationals Indoor and Outdoor
 - Plus some photos that give a snapshot of the club in action



SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Some athletes have achieved multiple national medals across the course of 2019 and some were subsequently awarded with international recognition:

- u16 Conor Hoade earned a staggering 9 National medals across club Indoors and outdoors including 5 golds, 2 silver and 2 bronze. He broke the Championship Best Performance for Pentathlon with 4146 points & claimed short & long hurdles titles plus indoor & outdoor long jump and relay medals.
- Eimear Rowe won 3 golds and a silver in the outdoor nationals (including 200m and 400m) plus an Indoor gold for 4x200m relay and a well-deserved first 'green vest' and 4x400m Relay bronze in the Youth Nations Cup recently.
- Chloe Casey represented Ireland for Multi Events last Autumn by winning the Irish Schools title. She added Indoor relay gold and then 4 national outdoor golds (including Long Jump) and a silver for sprint hurdles.
- Seren O'Toole finished a brilliant year with Youth Nations silver for 400m Hurdles; this was in addition to 3 Relay gold and the 400m hurdles title at National outdoors plus Indoor Relay gold. She also took national Junior gold for relay.

- Robert McDonnell qualified for the European Youth Olympics with a superb 400m time locally; he won double gold in County Indoors over 200m and 400m and raced to silver and gold respectively at Irish Schools. He added 400m gold in national outdoors plus a gold (Relay) & bronze (400m) at Youth Nations Cup recently.

As always, there were performances that stood out and were recognised formally or via a significant new record.



Emma Moore scooped several awards for her exceptional achievements in 2017/'18 and continued this form into Cross Country and early parts of the Indoor and Outdoor championships. Her 2:11.98 and 2:13.16 times from last season are the fastest outdoor and indoor 800m times ever recorded by a GCH juvenile girl of any age. She was the highest finisher from GCH at the National Cross Country Championships in November before smashing the Championship Best Performances over 200m and 800m in the County Indoors in January. Unfortunately injury prevented her from repeating more of the 2018 high points, but we hope to see her (and others with similar issues) back with us for a successful 2019/'20 season.

There were **3 Championship Best Performances** recorded at National Outdoors as follows:

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| • Under 18 Girls 4x400m Relay | Casey, Deeley, Moran, O'Toole, Rowe | 3:59.73 |
| • Under 16 Boys Pentathlon | Conor Hoade | 4146 pts |
| • Under 15 Boys 100m (All Ireland Bs) | Christian Ugbemudia | 11.89s |

And there were quite a few performances that proved to be the **best ever recorded** by ANY GCH juvenile of ANY age for that event - as follows (outdoors unless otherwise stated):

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| • Girls 400m Hurdles | Seren O'Toole | 1:04.25 |
| • Girls Long Jump | Chloe Casey | 5.54m |
| • Girls Long Jump (Indoor) | Chloe Casey | 5.49m |
| • Girls Shot Putt (Indoor) | Chloe Casey | 12.54m |
| • Girls Pentathlon (Indoor) | Chloe Casey | 3598 pts |
| • Girls 4x400m | Casey, Deeley, Moran, O'Toole, Rowe | 3:59.73 |
| • Boys 400m | Robert McDonnell | 48.42s |
| • Boys Pole Vault | Eoghan Jennings | 3.00m |
| • Boys Triple Jump | Richard Kamson | 12.45m |

Amazingly, all 3 of Chloe Casey's Indoor Records were set in the same International Indoor competition, and in total, she was involved in 5 of the 9 records including Sprinting, Distance running, Long Jump, High Jump, Shot Putt and Hurdles. You can read much more about club records set this season in the accompanying article.

CROSS COUNTRY

The last few weeks have felt like Cross Country weather but it's a full 11 months since last year's season began with competitions in Castlegar and Renmore.



Some of the Cross Country highlights of the season were as follows:

- Mia Craughwell had a great win in the Galway Primary Schools Senior Girls Race
- At the County Championships, Isabella Burke took the under 14 Girls title, Emma Moore won at u16 level, Barry Murphy was 1st under 18 home and the under 14s won their Team race.
- In Uneven ages, there were fantastic wins for Mia Craughwell (under 13) and Emma Moore (under 15). The under 15 Boys and Under 16 Girls won team gold. Orna Dunne was 3rd in the under 9 race and lead the team to silver in what was their first ever club competition
- At Connachts, Mia Craughwell and Eimear Rowe both earned impressive 4th places in u11 and u17 races respectively; Emma Moore was outstanding when winning the u15 race and helping the team to Gold medals with Aoibhe Joyce, Rachel Fahy, Leana Nic Dhonncha, Gillian McGrath and Eabha Walsh the other team members; Cillian Jordan and Aaron Brennan were both medallists in the under 17 race
- At Nationals, the under 20 team that finished 2nd in the team competition featured current and very recent juveniles Aaron Brennan, Barry Murphy, Cillian Jordan, Jack Maher, Thomas McStay, Eanna Folan and Rian de Bairead. It was a superb achievement for the boys and their highly respected distance coach Matt Lockett.
- Despite being under 15, Emma Moore was the highest GCH finisher in the even ages Nationals when finishing 14th in the under 16 race. Mia Craughwell and Eimear Rowe were the club's next best performers overall. In the Uneven age Nationals just before Christmas, Mia Craughwell was the club's highest placed finisher in 93rd position, with Eoin Killeen, Brian O'Culain and Gillian McGrath with the next highest finishes.

INDOORS

Chloe Casey started our Indoor season in style with an All-Ireland title in Schools Combined Events, scoring 3348 points and earning an Irish vest in the process. She would go on to finish 4th in the International Competition in Glasgow weeks later, earning a memorable team silver medal. In January, Conor Hoade and Darragh Jennings achieved a fantastic 1-2 for the club in the National Combined Events.

There were standout winning performances at the County Indoors Day 1 by Ben Moran in High Jump, Conor Faherty in 600m, Elisa Jaine-Stapleton in 60m & Sara Donald in 60m and Long Jump. Sarah and the Under 10 Girls Relay Team set a new Championship Best Performance over 4x200m. The very first gold of the Indoors was won by GCH's Jessica Kay with a brilliant u12 Hurdles victory.

On Day 2, many of the club's newest members shone, with Andrew Egan, Chloe Casey, Conor Trehy, Emma-Jane and Evan Moran, Lianne Colleran, Maiah Fleetwood, Robert Urquhart, Shaun Gilligan & Tara Keane among those competing impressively in GCH colours for the first time. Emma Moore set new Championship Best Performances over 200m and 800m, as did Ava McKeon and Conor Hoade in 60m Hurdles as well as Chloe Casey in both Long Jump and Shot Putt.

The club accepted an invitation to take part for the first time in the AIT International Grand Prix in February, sending a Boys under 13 Relay Team. Conor Faherty, Ben Moran, Richard McGrath and Ronan Duggan made it a night to remember for GCH by winning their race in style before a thronged crowd and many world-class athletes. Hopefully we will get invited again in 2020.

At Connachts, a large contingent qualified for Nationals. There was success in events not frequented by GCH athletes too, with Caitlin Podmore setting a new GCH record in the 1km Walk and both Juno Hayes and Aibidh Ni Mhaille striking silver in Shot Putt. High Jumpers Conor Hoade and Matthieu Madden qualified and Thea Power was close.

There were several gold medallists at the Nationals, with Ava McKeon powering to Hurdles gold and Matthieu Madden defying the odds and gravity when winning the High Jump in his second competition ever. Ronan Duggan claimed an excellent bronze in u13 Hurdles as did Conor Hoade for u16 Long Jump.



portsfile 6 April 2019: Callum Olliphant of MSB (dublin) celebrates winning the under-17 boys 4x200m relay event from second place Shaun Gilligan from Galway City Harriers AC and third place Nurtan Kennedy from St. Laurence O'Toole AC Carlow during Day 3 of the Irish Life Health National Juvenile Indoor Championships at AIT in Athlone, Co Westmeath. Photo by Matt Browne/Sportsfile

One of the photos of the year has to be the one above, where Shaun Gilligan was involved in a gripping final leg of the under 17 Relay, drawing on every last bit of strength and determination to clinch a magnificent silver for his team (Shaun, Andrew Egan, Niall Breathnach and Conor Hoade) in the blanket finish.

COACHING

Coaches upgraded their knowledge, certificates and training in various ways, including a Turbo Javelin Workshop with Louis Wildenboer, a high-performance javelin thrower & coach from South Africa (see photo). The benefits of such add-ons (experienced new coaches & event-specific workshops) were immediately seen: a brand new thrower, under 10 Dara Breathnach instantly smashed existing club & county records for Turbo Javelin, and qualified for Nationals with partner Matthew Murphy.

Multiple throws records were set across age groups (under) 10, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 18. And along with the u10 boys, Tara Keane & Rebecca Lynch (Javelin), Oisín Keane and Darragh Jennings (Discus) and Juno Hayes (Shot Putt) all qualified to Nationals, where Darragh Jennings defended his National Discus title in July to crown a great year for Throws overall.



Athletes also availed of several opportunities to improve themselves. Numerous GCH athletes were called to the Connacht Development Squad under the expert and kindly guidance of newly crowned National 400m Hurdles champion, Paul Byrne. Selection is based on top 4 positions in Connacht championships or equivalent during the year & some of the best coaches in the province (including Mary Barrett, Paul himself and our own Cliff Jennings) were among those involved.

In terms of aesthetics and professionalism, new club gear was sourced and embraced by many members in the run-up to Christmas for both athletes and coaches.

A Summer Camp was held in July with co-ordinator Tracy Moran and many other club coaches heavily involved as well as Junior athlete Diego Brule and under 18 Chloe Casey. This was a new venture for the club, and it proved to be a hugely successful one, with a fantastic group of children and lovely parents – with great feedback too. ‘Run, Jump, Throw’ was a key theme for the week, and it certainly played out that way, with sprints, relays, high jump, long jump and turbo javelin among the main components AND the most popular activities. Many athletes came from far away places like Spain and Paris, with many others suggesting they intend to join GCH and enjoy more of the same in September.

OUTDOORS

The club registered 20 Individual National outdoors medals between under 12 and under 18 & supplemented this with 5 Relay titles, 2 second places and 1 set of bronze medals. Medals were spread across 200m (1), 400m (1), Short (3) and Long Hurdles (3), Long Jump (3), High Jump (1), Triple Jump (3), Discus (1) and Pole Vault (1) – plus 3 multi events medals. There was also 8 All Ireland B medals won across sprints, distance, long jump, high jump & shot putt.



Some athletes competed up an age or two (or three) in Junior or Senior events. Seren O'Toole joined last year's under 19s to win a Junior Relay title, while Eoghan Jennings and Richard Kamson contributed to the GCH Senior League team's efforts.

In the County Outdoors there were many superb performances. New members Callum Healy, Chloe Hallinan, Jack Barry, Finbarr McFadden and Aoibhe Deeley were among those impressing most. The Under 13 Girls won medals at this level for the first time and their photo was to appear across multiple reports! Dara Breathnach smashed the County Record in Turbo Javelin with a 17m throw. The Under 12 boys demonstrated their vast potential when winning one of the toughest age groups in Galway. Aoife Waldron won her first ever Triple Jump contest with a club record. Anna Lee began to deliver sprint medals following an incredible improvement year on year. Evan Moran won a double gold and the Under 10 girls comfortably won their relay and claimed four pair medals in the Long Jump. Under 13 athlete Tara Keane won a gold, two silvers and a bronze – and remarkably set a Championship Best Performance for the Javelin (or Turbo Javelin) for the 5th year in a row.

Conor Hoade won 5 gold medals including two Championship Best Performances while Chloe Casey won two individual golds and several golds for relay also. Soon afterwards, Robert McDonnell achieved a European Youth Games qualifier for 400m in the County Junior Championships.

In the Connacht Championships, Eoghan Jennings won two individual golds and two silver. Nicole Quirke had a superb sprint double at under 15 level, with Anna Lee a double sprint medallist also. Evan Moran won both 200m and Hurdles. Conor Hoade won all three of his events, while Chloe Casey recorded a massive 5.54m Long Jump that was the furthest jump ever by a GCH female at juvenile level. Tara Keane qualified in all three events for nationals including a club record 4.40m in Long Jump. Juno Hayes also qualified for all three of her events. Luke Dahler marked a return from a bad injury with three medals under 16 for both sprints and Long Jump, a feat also achieved by another under 16, Oisín Keane in High Jump, Shot and Discus.

New member Angela Cielecka stunned many when winning the under 13 80m in her first competitive outing.

GCH under 14 girls won their first ever Connacht relay medals; Conor Trehy won a great jumps double gold, while Shaun Gilligan, Andrew Egan and Niall Breathnach showed impressive pace over the u17 sprints. Richard Kamson recorded the furthest Triple Jump ever by a GCH juvenile, while Mathieu Madden leaped 1.70m to equal his own club record. Chloe Casey, Aoibhe Deeley and Seren O'Toole won multiple u18 Connacht titles between them.

The Nationals yielded many golden memories, with national titles earned by Conor Hoade at 80m Hurdles and 250m Hurdles, Seren O'Toole at 400m Hurdles, Eimear Rowe for 400m and Chloe Casey for Long Jump. Christian Ogbemdia won the under 15 B title with a Championship Best Performance.

There were additional bonus appearances for the likes of Robert Urquhart (Tailteann Games) and Seren O'Toole, Eimear Rowe and Robert McDonnell (Youth Nations Cup) plus some wonderful Irish schools medals for Callum Healy, Darragh Jennings, Mathieu Madden and Robert McDonnell. Eoghan Jennings, Mathieu Madden and Conor Hoade made it 3 medals for the club in the National Combined Events. Overall, it was a fantastic outdoor season for the club.

JUMPS and POLE VAULT

GCH saw good return for renewed efforts to incorporate jumping events in training sessions.

Mathieu Madden was one of the great stories of the year when he won the All Ireland title for High Jump after taking up the event only weeks beforehand.



Aoife Waldron and Conor Trehy medalled at Nationals in Triple Jump, while Richard Kamson recorded the furthest distance ever recorded for the event – 12.45m – by a GCH juvenile.

And completing a jumps 'sweep', Conor Hoade medalled both indoors and outdoors for Long Jump, while Ben Moran and Chloe Casey added outdoor national medals, including a superb national title and juvenile club record for Chloe. Elisa Jaine-Stapleton provided a great example of resilience bouncing back from disappointment at national indoors to win a brilliant silver at the All-Ireland Bs for Long Jump.

Eoghan Jennings has taken Pole Vault to literally new levels single-handedly for the club. His 3m clearance earned him a National medal and club record – and this form was very useful to the Senior League Team also.

SPRINT RELAYS

Five national titles, two silvers and a bronze in the outdoors marked signs of a potential return to the heady days of GCH being seen as a powerhouse on the relay scene at the Outdoor Championships. With u15, u16, u17, u18 and u19 ALL medalling, there is plenty to build on for next year, when we hope the return from injury of Emma Moore and Ava McKeon among others, plus new-blood in most age groups will provide even stronger teams and even happier memories.

GCH had effectively 'brand new' teams at under 12 Boys and u15 Boys; the former stormed to gold in county and were quick enough to medal at Nationals, while the latter emerged almost out-of-the-blue to take a completely unexpected silver at National outdoors last month, within a whisker of winning.

Suddenly the under 13 girls have two excellent teams, both capable of qualifying for Nationals next year, with under 14 girls medalling at Connacht for first time this year. The Under 10 girls won at county convincingly and were in the top few times in Ireland heading into the Nationals.



The groundwork is being done on both sides of the track at training, with dividends also evident in other events such as hurdles and long jump. Even as late in the season as the 17th of August, sprinters Roisin Dalton, Sarah Donald, Lauren Foley and Evan Moran were representing their county at National level.

NEW MEMBERS

There were many new faces during the year who added greatly to atmosphere, friendships and success on the track, especially in sprint events. Following direct contact from their school, we were able to welcome additional members of Merlin College's excellent Minor Boys relay team to the club. Christian Ugbemudia had already won the 100m in the Irish Schools, and added the All Ireland B 100m title in his first outing for GCH. We also saw a new group of under 13 girls arrive (below) and all instantly made their mark at training and in competition. Angela Cielecka became Connacht 80m champion in her first day out with the club.

Callum Healy was another new face who made an instant impact, helping the u16s to a first ever national relay title after 2 silvers last year, as well as grabbing a brilliant silver in the 250m Hurdles for an eye-catching club 1-2 in the event. Jack Barry's arrival also saw an immediate impact with a gold medal in the All Ireland B final for under 12s and a gold for the under 12 boys relay team in the County Championships. Aoibhe Deeley immediately made an impact for the club in the outdoors, with numerous medals for Individual events as well as several national golds for relay.



COMMUNITY GAMES & CROKE PARK

There were many successful athletes from GCH in the County Community Games this year, with Sarah Donald, Lauren Foley, & Evan Moran all competing to extend their Summer to August 17th/18th when the National finals took place. Roisin Dalton was also due to compete but was unfortunately unable due to injury. Sarah was 2nd in heat and 4th in semi to make the final of the u10 200m. Evan was also 2nd in heat and 4th in his final – losing out for the 4th place medal by a whisker in his final!



At the same Festival, GCH athletes Fiach and Oisin Silke won silver medals with their Moycullen/Galway under 10 Football team.

Another GCH athlete representing his county at football this month was Galway Minor captain, Jonathan McGrath, who was actually Man of the Match in the All-Ireland semi-final. We wish Jonathan the very best of luck in the final.

FAREWELL AND WELCOME

Finally, some of our juveniles will be passing through from Juvenile to Junior/Senior ranks; we thank them for their dedication and everything they have given for GCH over the years. Last year's 'Graduates' from juvenile ranks included Irish-capped Laura Nally and Aoife Sheehy who joined forces with current u18 Seren O'Toole and u19 Rachel Hughes to win the National Junior 4x400m relay title recently. We hope to continue seeing successful continuation and transition between juvenile and afterwards for as long as the club exists!



Training resumes on the Sunday 8th September. Registration for the coming year can be arranged there and then. We welcome all, including the many participants from the GCH Summer Camp who have let us know of their intention to join us and we know from the welcome afforded to new athletes this year that they will be made feel very welcome & make lasting friendships. Look forward very much to seeing everyone in September!

Footnote:

This is an attempt to summarise the GCH year, which is, of course, almost impossible given the number of athletes and great moments all year. Apologies if we omitted anyone in this or other files. Please let us know if we have inadvertently overlooked an athlete or significant performance and we will be glad to revise or include next time.