

Report of the Hon. Competitions Secretary

2005-2006

Once again, we have enjoyed a marvellous year of intervarsity athletics. The season began as it always does with the Road Relays at NUI, Maynooth on the 19th November. The women's event was dominated by the DCU, which for the second year in succession claimed the gold and bronze medals. UCC also had a fine performance splitting the two DCU teams. This year's event continued the trend of rising standards that has been a feature of the women's event over the past few years. However, the many fine individual performances, somewhat masks the fact that participation - in terms of numbers - in the women's event, is still quite low with only 13 full teams and 62 athletes in total taking part. Only seven colleges were represented.

The Men's event was a hotly contested affair between UCD and DCU, with UCD emerging as victors in the final metres. Of note, was the bronze medal performance of the UU team –this was the first time that a medal had been won by UU in this Championship. In line with the women event, the competitive standard was encouragingly high. A total of 128 athletes competed with 23 full teams taking part. Again, however, only 8 colleges took part. The Road Relay Championship is unique in that it is the overall team performance rather than any single individual that is rewarded. The format, with small teams allows the smaller institutions to compete more readily against the larger institutions. Echoing the sentiments of previous Hon. Competitions Secretaries, I would therefore encourage all member institutions - regardless of size - to commit to supporting these championships in the future.

As ever, the staging of the event by NUI, Maynooth was flawless and on behalf of the IUAA Executive and membership I extend my gratitude to them for their continuing efforts in staging this championship.

The Indoor championship moved from its traditional Friday/Saturday slot to a more accommodating Saturday/Sunday format. Staged at a busy time of year for students,

the change in the timetable was broadly welcomed by those who took part. This I believe was apparent in the turn-out of athletes, with 16 colleges represented in the men's competition and 11 in the women's event. Once again, the championship is memorable for the high standard of athletic performance on the track in the field at a time when many athletes are deep in winter training or in the middle of the cross-country season, with records falling in the women's 4x200metres relay and the men's 3000metres. The women's event was dominated once again by DCU, with a strong UU team taking second and UL claiming third. UU took the honours in the men's competition with UCD and TCD taking second and third respectively. The overall team competition was won by the UU.

With the aim of ensuring the integrity of IUAA competition, a concerted effort was made to check student ID cards throughout the season. This effort was begun at the Indoors and almost without exception all ID cards were checked at registration. Athletes are to be commended for their patience and levels of co-operation in this endeavour.

Despite the by now well documented controversy which marked the run-up to these Championships, it should be remembered more appropriately for the quality of performances of the athletes rather than the catalogue of miscommunication and misinformation which marred the preparations. As has been the case in recent years, DCU women dominated the 4km championship, taking a clean sweep of the medals and retaining the Cheetahs trophy. The men's honours went to UCD with DCU and QUB claiming second and third places. The Badger trophy returned to DCU for the fourth year in succession. By way of addressing some of the issues that arose in relation to this championship, I would suggest that the organising committee at host colleges appoint a member to liaise with the Hon. Competitions Secretary so that matters arising can be dealt with quickly and efficiently. I would further suggest that it be remembered that it often proves prudent and productive to air grievances in a timely manner through official channels. For this reason, I would ask any member who wishes to discuss matters related to competition to communicate with the Hon. Competitions Secretary. Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to extend the gratitude and congratulations of all IUAA members to the organising committee of

DUHAC for providing a splendid competition venue, course and post-competition entertainment.

The Track and Field Championship were hosted in impressive fashion by the University of Ulster. The expertise of the NIAF officials in conjunction with UU members allowed for the smooth and efficient running of the Championships. One would hope that this kind of cross-body co-operation will be a feature of our championships in particular and the sport of athletics in general in the future. On the track and in the field the performances were equally impressive. This Championship was notable for the intensity of competition between the hosts and DCU. In the women's event, the honours went to DCU by a slim margin from UU and UCC some way back. The honours were reversed in the men's competition with UU winning from DCU and UL. The hosts UU claimed the overall trophy for the first time. I extend my thanks and appreciation to all of the UU organising committee for their hosting of this excellent championship.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the importance of participation in IUAA events. Each and every member has an equally important role to play in making our competitions a success be it as athlete or as official. In the light of proposed changes to the competition structure, I would now place the onus now on the member colleges to take-part and to participate fully as we move forward and develop meaningful competition at all levels.

Yours in Sport

Jacqueline Mulhall

Hon. Competitions Secretary IUAA 2005-2006