

BACKSPIN

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PPUI

Issue Highlights:

- 2017 National Seniors
- 2017 National Mixed Foursomes Winners
- Winning Ladies of 2017
- Plus More...

A Chara,

You are welcome to this the third edition of Backspin for 2017. This particular issue focusses a lot on the achievements of our female players over the period since our last edition nearly two months ago. It is fitting that we focus a lot on the female winners in this edition at a time when there is a lot of discussion in general about the participation of women in sport.

We have video pieces done with our National Gents Strokeplay winners and U-16 winners but these videos will be posted at a later date possibly in a more reflective period over the winter time. As well as our National Ladies Strokeplay winners we also look at the National O-55 winners from Cloghogue across all six competitions while the National Mixed Foursomes winners from last Saturday in Lucan are also profiled. John Manning has also thrown his statistical eye (*continued on last page ...*)



Pat Greene
(Seapoint)

National Seniors Champion (Senior)



Ronan Hollywood
(Cloghogue)

National Seniors Champion (Inter)



Matt McArdle
(Cloghogue)

National Seniors Champion (Junior)



Kathleen Geraghty
(Skyme)

National Seniors Champion (Senior)



Maree O'Toole
(Shandon)

National Seniors Champion (Inter)



Nora O'Hare
(Cloghogue)

National Seniors Champion (Junior)

PPUI Honorary President Mervyn Cooney pictured with each of winners at the PPUI National Seniors held recently at Cloghogue Pitch & Putt Club, Newry, Co. Down.

2017 Ladies National Strokeplay Winner Ger

By John Manning

John Manning speaks to Ger Ward after her latest National Strokeplay success in Cement back in early July.

For once she was the hunter rather than the hunted. Including her maiden success at Listowel back in 1994, this was just the third time in her nine National Strokeplay victories that Geraldine Ward hasn't led (or jointly led) into the final round. "It's always great to come from behind. This time there was one shot in the difference. It did not feel any different. I was level after the second hole so that gave me the confidence with 16 holes left to try and win."

As usual there were some critical success factors. "I think one turning point was at the eighth hole. I sank a nine-foot putt up and across the hill for a two, then stuck the ninth for two in a row to put me two shots ahead." Those two shots constituted Ger's final winning margin. Her 152-aggregate at Cement was the second

highest of her nine winning totals but her domination of the National Strokeplay championship continues. She hasn't finished outside the top five in the event since 2009.

36-hole leader (and three-time champion) Chrissie Byrne wasn't going to give up without a fight but there was another vital swing on the back nine. "Again at the sixteenth hole, I got a great three to stay one ahead and birdied seventeen to get two ahead with the long eighteenth hole to come." Ger had also overhauled Chrissie Byrne's 36-hole lead at Lakewood in 2003.

There was little margin for error this year with only half a dozen players making the cut but the 20 times national individual champion took all this in her stride. "No, I didn't feel any pressure with six qualifiers because the field was so small." Ger has made the final round every year since 2001 (that's 17 cuts made in row).



PPUI Honorary President presents 2017 National Ladies Strokeplay (Senior Grade) champion Ger Ward with her prizes.

Although eight of her wins have come since the three-round set-up was reintroduced in 1998, Ger has some interesting views on the format. “My personal feeling is that National Strokeplay should go back to 36 holes with such a small number playing.”

Ger was Leinster Strokeplay champion at Cement five years ago and has a great affinity with the fine Drogheda venue. “Cement is a great pitching course. You know you have played well when you win there. The course is always in great condition. You can pitch well but you have to putt to score.”

2017 was Geraldine’s third time winning the Matchplay and Strokeplay championships in the same year, which puts Clare Keating’s four doubles on the horizon. But that fact has scarcely registered with the Portmarnock legend. “No, John - I don’t set goals for myself. I just love playing Pitch and Putt, if it goes my way, great.

If it does not, I don’t let it bother me.”

What does bother our No. 1 lady is the current state of the female sport in Ireland. “I’m very worried for the ladies’ game. There don’t seem to be any answers to bring ladies into competitions. Our new handicap system has good and bad elements. At the moment, we are only seeing the bad. I never thought I would be playing off plus 2!”

The heady days of hundreds of entries and regional qualifying rounds appear to be no more and Ger would love to find solutions. “I agree Ladies are not able to compete with a small group of elite Ladies. I think this can be sorted by a different route. I don’t think we will have senior All Ireland’s in the future with not enough entries but I hope they continue in the other grades. People say only two shots back in a year per player. Cap Ladies’ handicaps and bring back nett prizes into national, regional and county competitions. I just don’t know but wish the NEC the best of luck with the future.”



2017 Munster Inter-County winners (Senior Grade), Cork. Cork finished with a team total of 406, 8 shots clear of Limerick with Kerry in third.

2017 National Seniors Winning Gents

By John Manning

John Manning profiles the winning Gents from the National 0-55's Championships in Cloghogue

Matt McArdle- Junior Winner

Matt McArdle will reach 86 years of age in September 2017 but that didn't stop him repelling all pretenders (including two visiting Dutchmen) and winning the National Over 55 Junior Strokeplay championship over his beloved Cloghogue course.

Matt is in reflective mode as he recalls his impressive win, just ahead of Dutch pair Martin Verbeek (who was the holder of the title) and Ed Janssen, who both represent the Lough Owel club. "While I'm honoured to be called an All-Ireland Champion in a sport I have played for almost 50 years, I feel privileged not only to have won, but to have been involved in what was a great weekend of Pitch & Putt."

Matt is a former President and Captain of

Cloghogue and it's obvious that the Over 55s weekend meant much to him on a number of different levels. "I've been a member of Cloghogue for all that time and I was so proud of the club in both its achievements on the playing front and also in how our course and hospitality was presented – it was a credit to our committee and members who give of their time to have everything in order."

A regular face on northern Inter-County teams since the mid-1970s, Matt recognises that the tremendous support that spurred him to his impressive four under par return and a one-shot victory. "I must also thank those spectators who braved the elements on the Sunday morning to encourage us on, and in that vein, I must thank my two playing partners Michael Kenny (Ferbane) and Jim Meleady (Navan) who were great company which made for an enjoyable game."

Matt makes light of the stiff and lame leg he has



2017 National u-16 Matchplay Champion Seanie Bellew. In it's second year the Helen Presson Memorial Cup will head to Meath. Aaron Roche from the host club, St. Stephen's, was the winner of the plate competition



2017 Leinster Ladies Inter-County (Senior Grade) winning side of Kildare. The team was made up of Christine Byrne, Marian Courtney, Tara Dillon, Margaret Keogh, Mary Donnelly & Mairead O'Toole

lived and coped with for many years. “I suppose such a win at my age and with my disability only confirms that Pitch and Putt is a game for all: - all ages and all abilities and it’s great that the PPUI gives that opportunity to everyone. I am around long enough to know that winning is nice but taking part is a privilege.”

What a delightful attitude and a wonderful endorsement of the sport of the Pitch and Putt from the man who is the fourth player to win the National Junior Over 55 Strokeplay championship on his home course.

Ronan Hollywood- Intermediate Winner

Former Down Inter-County player Ronan Hollywood was in optimistic mood in advance of the National Over 55 Intermediate Strokeplay Championship. “I had come into the event in reasonable form after a good performance in the local qualifiers.”

The vagaries of the shotgun start format presented

Ronan with a challenging opening assignment. But it proved to be a catalyst. “When I hit my tee-shot to six inches on my opening hole, Cloghogue’s hardest hole, the 70m 8th, it was to be a great springboard.”

Few championship victories are delivered without some form of calamity along the way. “All was going well until my 35th hole. I was 12 under when disaster struck. I took three attempts to clear a two-foot bank at our 6th hole and I ran up a six. I had known from whispers on the course that I had had a three-shot lead, then suddenly, I had one hole to play so I needed to hold it together to get a par just to stay in touch.”

A showdown with a doughty competitor loomed. “The atmosphere for the play-off was fantastic. I was aware of Sean’s reputation as a great player and again it took a very good opening tee-shot where I pitched to three feet, which was met by large local cheers, to steady the nerves. I did joke with Sean that the crowd might be a bit one sided. Birdies at one and two give me a good early

advantage and they ended up being decisive.”

Ronan outlasted Riverdale’s Sean Minogue over those extra nine holes so his 2017 play-off reminisces will out rank memories of Lakeside 2000, when he was last involved at the business end of a PPUI national championship. “Sean is as much as a sportsman as he is a competitor and although it didn’t go for him in the play-off, he warmly congratulated me on my win. There is no doubt home advantage gives an amazing opportunity but I was so grateful for the support from my club and fellow players.”

Former Cloghogue club captain Ronan is magnanimous in his post championship tributes. “I would like to thank my own club and committee for all the work to have the course at the standard it was, and the PPUI for the wonderful organising for this event.”

Pat Greene- Senior Winner

Pat Greene's awesome record in the National Over 55 Senior Grade Strokeplay continued at

Cloghogue. The Seapoint star now has three wins (which is the most in history) and three seconds. Trailing by two after 18 holes, Pat’s brilliant 46 second round gave him victory by three over Cloghogue’s Michael Concannon.

Testament to Pat Greene’s enduring record as an outstanding player is that 25 years ago, he was Louth’s joint top scorer when the Wee County won the Inter-County championship at Cloghogue. After a Leinster Strokeplay win at Seapoint in 1996 and a provincial Matchplay runner-up performance at Cement in 1998, Pat holed the winning putt for Louth in the Inter-County at Seapoint in 2002, just as he had done at Cloghogue ten years before.

Pat’s first Over 55s Strokeplay win was by seven shots at Deerpark in 2006. Two years later, Greene defeated Shandon’s Dermot Nolan in a play-off at Hillview. After three second places (in 2009, 2011 and 2014), Pat’s dominant performance in Newry saw him move ahead of William Sheridan and Anthony Malone on the all-time Roll of Honour.



PPUI President Mervyn Cooney presents the trophy to Cork after their victory in the 2017 National u-16 Inter-County Championship hosted by Erry.

2017 National Ladies Intermediate Strokeplay Winner

Cathy Richardson

By John Manning

“I’m only an Inter a couple of weeks!” laughs 2017 National Intermediate Strokeplay champion Cathy Richardson.

In the excitement of a National Strokeplay final round, Cathy momentarily lost count! A chance meeting with a Cement star in the gallery deep into the closing holes reassured her. Ian Donnelly verified that Cathy was still three strokes clear. The new champion confirmed that she was in a position to draw on previous positive experiences such as Best Gross in the 2007 Leinster Mixed Foursomes and runner-up with Meath in the 2009 Leinster Inter-County. “Yes, I was. I’m very competitive. I wouldn’t give up.”

A blemish free round, so beloved of Pitch & Putt practitioners, gave Cathy Richardson a stranglehold on the latest renewal of the Ladies Intermediate Strokeplay Championship. “I had a hole in one and a couple of birdies.

No over par in that round.” That fantastic second round of 50 (which included the ace on Cement’s 50 metre second hole) propelled Cathy from two shots behind after 18 into the 36-hole leadership on 106.

Although she had three shots in hand going out on the final eighteen, Cathy admits to being slightly nervous playing with such an experienced campaigner as Phil Condron. “But I just said Phil would keep you going. We’d be egging each other on not to play bad. I

know Phil a long time through the Pitch & Putt circuit.”

“It was good! I’m happy with it!” is Cathy’s understated summary on how she feels to be the first Bellewstown player to win a national Ladies title. Cathy is very familiar with the Cement course, which lies less than fifteen miles from her home. That familiarity, born from open visits through the years, meant she eschewed any pre-championship practice rounds. Although that decision also owes much to her preparation philosophy. “I know Cement. Once you’re familiar with it, I wouldn’t go to practice. It’s all on the day!”

The Co. Dublin native has been our sport for 18-20 years. “I started Pitch & Putt in Man O’ War. Then we moved to Ringcommons and then to Bellewstown.”



2017 Leinster Inter County (Senior) winners, Dublin. Dublin team consisted of John Ross Crangle, Junior Smith, Christopher Gallagher, Gary Healy, Stephen Murray and George McGreal.



PPUI President Mervyn Cooney presents Mark Millar (Cement) with the Donnelly Cup after his success in the National Gents Strokeplay @ Hillview P&P Club. Mark finished one shot ahead of Lakeside's Stephen Shoer.

“We play everywhere together,” says Cathy of Thomas Costello, who was Cathy’s partner in that 2007 Leinster Mixed Foursomes Best Gross victory. “We go the length and breadth of the country playing Pitch & Putt. We went to Cork to play in the Foursomes.” A keen sports person, Cathy slightly regrets not taking up Pitch and Putt sooner. “I’ve been Senior for a number of years. I’ve played a lot and won a few Meath championships. I wouldn’t be a senior, senior like Ger Ward or Sheelagh Elmes. I didn’t start playing until I was 40!”

But the hand eye co-ordination and determination, honed in another code, have served Cathy Richardson well on the Pitch & Putt courses of Ireland. “I played cricket with North County Ladies,” says Cathy, whose nephew is Irish cricketing legend Johnny Mooney, scorer of the winning runs when Ireland beat England at the World Cup. “The competitiveness is there!” That love for the scent of battle has delivered many

open prizes with Thomas Costello, along with another category award at this year’s Leinster Mixed Foursomes.

Loftier peaks loomed. “I was afraid of my life I’d ‘brick’ it in the last round,” admits the Bellewstown player of her opportunity to conquer a top-class field that included a former Irish Ladies champion and a former National Girls winner. Matching Phil Condrón stroke for stroke, Cathy delivered her biggest success to date.

Final putt of a closing 55 holed for a three-stroke victory margin; there was still some momentary confusion. “I was that excited, I didn’t realise what I’d won,” smiles Cathy. Club colleague Marie Black confirmed she was National Intermediate Strokeplay champion. “It was great. I’m delighted with the achievement.”

2017 National Mixed Foursomes

By Jason O'Connor

LAST Saturday was a day to remember for the Lucan club at the National Mixed Foursomes as four of the five prizes on offer at the event went to the host club, one of the most successful showings by a single club in a PPUI event. Jason O'Connor speaks to the winning pair Marie O'Toole & Ted Flynn.

They hadn't a lot of time together before the Qualifier but three weeks beforehand, the 2017 National Mixed Foursomes winners agreed to come together for the format. Both had experience of being amongst the prizes in the format albeit with different playing partners. Marie O'Toole's success had come in winning the Gross prize at the National back in 2005 while Ted Flynn had won an 18-hole prize in the Dublin Mixed Foursomes. They just managed to get the better of club-mates Tracey Smith & Anthony Malone in winning the Sean Coyne Memorial Cup by a single stroke with Brenda Purcell &

Terry McMorrow winning the Gross prize and Sandra & Peter Keogh winning the second session prize.

Shooting 12up in the Qualifier in Ringcommons ensured Marie and Ted of their place in the Finals on home turf and they played in a first playing session that featured the majority of the large contingent from Lucan. Going around 8up for their first round, they had given themselves a solid platform for their 13up winning score but as Ted explained it was a round that had its ups and downs, befitting the scoring nature of the competition. "Marie made a great putt on the 5th hole where we had no shot and that was a great boost to us but we had two minuses as well which we feared would come against us in the end. To find out we were leading after the first session was great but it was tough to wait around watching the second session and wondering what pairs were going well or not," Ted said.



2017 National Mixed Foursomes winners, Ted Flynn & Marie O'Toole (both Lucan P&P Club) pictured with PPUI President Mervyn Cooney and PPUI Treasurer Breda Brophy

Both players time playing Pitch & Putt is of different spectrums. Marie took up the game in the late 1970's and the prompting of a friend encouraging her to join Lucan. "Joan Gannon RIP was living near the course and there was a drive around the area to get new members at the time and she convinced me to join up," Marie said of taking up the game. A Leinster Junior Strokeplay win in 1985 and a Dublin Intermediate Strokeplay win in 1992 where Joan's most notable achievements up to last Saturday as she generally tries to play once a week. Ted meanwhile has been involved in the game for just under a decade but has been active in the running of the club since he first joined in 2008.

"I had been involved in coaching Football teams for a long time but I was looking for something new to do and around 2008 I saw a sign for the club saying that new members were being welcomed and I decided to join up. I had played

the game about 30 years earlier out in Glenside, Palmerstown as a child but never really followed up on it," Ted said of getting involved in the game. Two memorial competition wins in the club and a stint as Club Captain along with time on the club's competition committee and representing the club at Dublin County Board Meetings are some of Ted's most noticeable achievements prior to last Saturday. He praises the support the club gives it members when they are playing outside of Lucan.

"We are fairly distinctive with the club colours at PPUI events but it great to see the members of the club turn out not only at Nationals and Leinsters but also Dublin League matches as well. It gives great encouragement to us all." Marie concurs with those sentiments. "It's a great club to be involved in with how welcome they make you feel and how proud you are to represent them when you go outside the club afterwards."



2017 saw the launch of the u-20 National Strokeplay Championships which Cian Morrison (Douglas) claim the title. Left to right 3rd place Ronan O'Driscoll (Douglas), PPUI President, Mervyn Cooney, winner Cian Morrison and runner-up Ross O'Reilly from the Old County club.

2017 National Ladies Junior Strokeplay Winner

Margaret Forde

By John Manning

John Manning speaks to Riverdale's Margaret Forde about her win in the National Junior Ladies Strokeplay in Cement.

MARGARET Forde had experienced national success before in the Over 55s and for Riverdale in the National Scramble. But clearly, she craved a National Ladies Junior Strokeplay title like no other. "I found this much better. One I really wanted to win. I was runner-up a few times in the Munster Strokeplay. I was close a couple of times in nationals."

Three strokes in arrears going out, Margaret formulated a very clear game plan for the final round at Cement. "I wanted to play steady and try to keep getting pars. I knew I had chance if I could play a steady round and not make too many mistakes."

In typical Pitch & Putt fashion, Margaret

Forde is characteristically generous about her fellow competitor in that final round, 36-hole leader Sive Shelley. "She was very good, lovely to play with. She just lacked experience," says Margaret of her fellow Tipperary player. "I think the whole occasion got to her a bit in the final round. She dropped three shots on the first three holes. She was a bit nervous." Host venue Cement has generated another fan. "I loved the course. A tough course but I enjoyed playing it. I played on it a couple of years ago and I practiced the day before."

She is developing a reputation for getting over the line when in contention. "I was very confident going out in the final round as I usually play pretty well if I get to a final. In the over 55s in Collins a few years ago, I was in a play-off and I played really well in the play-off." That was in 2012, when Margaret outlasted Skyrne's Noreen Ryan in extra holes. The 18-hole leader



2017 Munster Ladies Inter-County (Intermediate) were Sarah O'Neill, Mairead Manning, Ailish Sexton and Patsy O'Donovan from Cork,



2017 Munster u-16 Inter County winning side, Kerry, who finished ahead of Cork in dramatic fashion after a 3 hole playoff.

at Cement on 56 at Cement, Margaret was again in control, when it mattered. Her closest pursuer on this occasion was another Royal County lady Margaret Delahunty, but the Royal Meath player finished a distant seven strokes behind.

Margaret's final round 55 was a big improvement on her second round 62. She pinpointed the factors that contributed to that step up. "I pitched okay in the second round but I went for some birdies and ended up getting fours. I felt safer on my chipping and putting in the third round. I rolled the ball up to the hole."

"We had a bit of a celebration alright. A few of us went out." recalls Margaret of a tumultuous weekend for the Riverdale player. That was on the Saturday night of her Strokeplay success and the Nenagh club's Scratch Cup was scheduled for the following day. "It was 1.30-2am when I got to bed and I had to take flowers up to the course on Sunday morning. I had to come back and dose myself before playing in the

Scratch Cup! For a while I couldn't see the hole!" It ended well. Margaret took Ladies laurels at the Riverdale Scratch Cup for a second win inside 24 hours.

She returns the Intermediate ranks on the back of her glory day in Cement. The 2017 season has proven very satisfying so far. "I've won four prizes in four scratch cups this year." Showing how Pitch & Putt can change at any given time, the 2017 Munster Strokeplay victor, "had a bad year last year. I got two shots back," laments Margaret. "I wasn't trying to get them back!"

The 2012 National Junior (Over 55s) Strokeplay Champion feels she has unfinished business with the Intermediate grade and the Over 55s Championships. "I threw away the Over 55s in Old County. I was five shots ahead going out in the final eighteen. I lifted my head on every chip."

The mark of a true champion. Always looking for the next peak to scale.

54-Hole National Ladies Strokeplay Stats

By John Manning

With this year's National Ladies Strokeplay marking a significant milestone in terms of the Championships' length, John Manning looks behind some of the numbers associated behind the move to a longer format.

The National Ladies' Strokeplay Championships has now been played 20 times since the event reverted to 54 holes in 1998. From 1998 to 2005, 12 players made the cut for the final 18 holes. The number in the final round was increased to 14 for the 2006 and 2007 championships, while 18 made the cut at Rocklodge in 2008. Just 10 qualified for the Last 18 at Glenville in 2009 and that was the number for the next seven championships. Falling entries have seen the number of final round qualifiers reduced to eight at St. Stephen's in 2016 and to just six this year.

Geraldine Ward, the nine-time champion

(and eight times since the 54-hole format was reintroduced) didn't make it into the field at all in 2000 but has not been out of the top ten any other year. In fact, she wasn't out of the top two for the six-year span - 2003-08. She has qualified for the final round nineteen times (17 in a row from 2001). Her average placing of 3.2 represents outstanding consistency. Ger's stroke average is also very impressive, 152. Chrissie Byrne has made the cut in every National Ladies Strokeplay championship since 2003 – that's 15 cuts made in a row. The Co. Kildare star has finished in the top three eight times in the last decade and a half, taking the title in 2005, 2011 and 2013. Chrissie's stroke average is 153 and her average placing is 3.7.

Sheelagh Elmes, who won over 36 holes in 1995, might not have collected the title in the '98-17 era but she has been pretty consistent.



2017 Munster Ladies Inter County (Junior) winners, Tipperary, represented by Catherine Dunne, Margaret Courtney, Josie McCormack & Elaine Quinn

Sheelagh's top performance in the 20-year phase came two years ago when she was runner-up at Ring Commons. There were also bronze medals at Irish Ropes (now Ryston) in 1998 and on home turf in Portmarnock eight years later. The Dublin Inter-County player holds an average placing of 5.9. Her stroke average is 158.6 for 54. Having missed her first cut (unluckily, running up a big number on the 36th) at St. Bridget's in 2004, Sheelagh was back in the final twelve at Douglas a year later and in all has made 15 cuts.

Marian Byrne Courtney has made the cut on 14 occasions. The St. Bridget's/Ryston player won at Tullamore in 1999. She has also finished second twice, third twice and fourth on three occasions. Her average placing is 4.9 and her stroke average is 154.9. Three-time runner-up Tara Dillon has never won the National Strokeplay Championship but she has made every cut since 2007 – that's 11 cuts in-a-row. Tara has scored an average of 154.3 on the 13 occasions she has made the final. Eight top four placings give Tara an average overall placing of 4.4.

Other consistent performances can be seen in the table below:

In 17 of the 20 stagings, the 36-hole leader has gone on to win (Geraldine Ward was tied for the lead with Siobhan Scannell after 36 holes at St. Bridget's in 2004). Tracey McGrath's superb 47 in 2009 catapulted the reigning National Matchplay champion from joint fourth after 36. Ger Ward has twice improved from second heading into the final round to take the title – 2003 and 2017.

The Champion has produced the low score (or the joint lowest return) in the final round in twelve of the 20 years. Tara Dillon's 47 was the best final round at St. Bridget's in 2004 when the 1996 National Intermediate Strokeplay champion finished in sixth place. Tara thus shot the low last eighteen for the second successive year, having fired a 49 en route to fourth overall at Lakewood in 2003. She also produced the equal low (with Chrissie Byrne) final eighteen at Rocklodge on 49. Having scored 52 in 2012 to equal champion Margaret Hogan, Tara again produced consecutive top final rounds in 2014 and 2015 and has now shot the lowest (or equal lowest) final round six times.

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Continued on next page:

Player	Club	Cuts Made	Average Pos.	Best Performance	Average Score	Top Score
Tracey McGrath	Erry	11	3.5	Win 2009	154.3	145
Margaret Hogan	Tullamore	9	5.8	Win 2006. 2012	154.3	148
Stella Sheridan	Glenville	8	8.1	Third 2002	161.2	148
Claire Murphy-O'Flynn	E.S.B.	6	8.7	Second 2004	158.5	155
Marina O'Rourke	Cloghogue	6	5.5	Win 2000	156.7	148
Siobhan Scannell	Collins	6	6.3	Second 2007	156.3	141
Peggy Campbell (RIP)	Glenville	5	2	Win 2002,	147.4	134

All-time low final round was Siobhan Scannell's stupendous 10 under 44 to be runner-up at Tullamore in 2007. Marian Byrne Courtney has twice scored the best final eighteen to finish second - at St Stephens in 2016 and at Ringcommons five years earlier. Leinster's dominance of Ladies Pitch & Putt is emphasized by the fact that of the 56 different players that have contested one or more play-offs since 1998, 35 have represented Leinster clubs compared to 19 from Munster and two from Ulster.

Bernie O'Rourke-Somers of Cloghogue qualified in 1998 and 2000 while 1997 champion (over 36 holes) and 2000 champion (over 54 holes) Marina O'Rourke made the cut in four of the first five championships and six times in all.

The 36-hole cut has varied from a low of 104 at St. Bridget's in 2004 (equaled in 2011 and in 2014) to a highest cut yet of the six over 114 at Douglas in 2005. The 20-year average is 107.7. The qualifiers at Tullamore in 2007 were a cumulative 43 under par for the 14 play-off rounds while at Cunnigar in 2010, the 10 finalists were a cumulative 26 over par. The overall average final round is approximately one under par (53.4).

The average final round at Glenville in 2001 was three-quarters of a shot (51.75 to 52.50) better than in 2009. The cumulative total under par in the final round in 2009 was -15, as against -27 in 2001. The 2001 cut (12 players) was 106 while the 2009 cut was 107 (10 players). The low final round was 46 in 2001 and 47 in 2009. Four players made both Glenville cuts. Ger Ward (5th in '01 and 10th in 2009) and Sheelagh Elmes (twice 6th) both survived. Chrissie Byrne (7th and 3rd respectively) and Stella Sheridan (3rd and 8th) also made both cuts.

The average final round at Ring Commons in 2015 was one and a half shots (53.6 to 52.1) worse than at the same venue four years earlier. The cumulative total under par in the final round in 2015 was four under, as against 19 under in 2011. The 2011 cut (10 players) was 104 while the 2015 cut was 107 (10 players). The low final round was 48 in both 2011 and 2015.

Demonstrating how the number of title contenders has probably contracted in recent years, half a dozen players made both final rounds at Ringcommons – Geraldine Ward, Chrissie Byrne, Tara Dillon, Tracey McGrath, Margaret Hogan and Breda White.



2017 Leinster u-16 Inter County Winners—Meath. With a combined score of 470 (38 shots clear of second place!!) the team was made up of Evan Carry, Seanie Bellew, Sean Clerkin, Joseph Smith, Killian Smith and Katie-Rose Heeney.

2017 National Ladies Seniors (Senior Grade)

By John Manning

“I was delighted”, laughs Kathleen Geraghty of her memorable victory in the National Ladies Over 55 senior grade Strokeplay championship. “I was absolutely thrilled with the win. I didn’t think it would ever happen with all the good players.”

“Things just went right for me. I just had a good day,” says the Skryne player modestly of her exceptional performance which finally clinched a championship, in which she had previously finished fourth and been runner-up twice.

“I was happy with the level par in the first round because of the conditions – rain and a cross wind. I felt I had something to work on.”

In a small but select field, Kathleen accompanied two former national ladies champions. “I was playing with Marina O’Rourke and Breda White. I said to myself, I was beating them, so I can’t be doing too badly!”

“I chipped in twice but I had a couple of fours as well. I was very pleased that I wasn’t dropping any more shots,” is how Kathleen describes the outstanding second round of 51, which clinched a two shot winning margin over Bernie Somers.

Kathleen Geraghty teed-off in familiar territory on July 15th. “I seem to play well in Cloghogue. I’ve played it a good few times. They used to have an over 55s Open and I won that twice.”

“Marina couldn’t have been nicer. And Bernie as well who was runner-up. They would love to have won it because of the year they have.” But it was Kathleen Geraghty’s day and she becomes the first Co. Meath player to become National Ladies Over 55 senior grade Strokeplay champion.



2017 National u-16 Strokeplay winner, Evan Carry (Castletown) pictured with PPUI President Mervyn Cooney. Evan is only the first person since Barry O’Neill in 98/99 to retain the title.

BACKSPIN PRODUCTION TEAM

Jason O'Connor, John Manning, and Paul Hayes

(continued from page 1) over the National Senior Ladies Strokeplay event since it became a 54-hole event in the year 1998 with the recent staging in Cement marking the 20th playing of it in such a format.

We have had a great and exciting summer of action in general and it is great to see the crowds turning up to watch our events steadily but noticeably increasing. We are just one-week shy now of the National Inter-County Championships in Ryston, an event that is always looked forward to as the best players in each county strive for success in their county colours. We will look at that event next week on the website in more detail as prepare now for the concluding events of 2017 in many respects over the coming weeks.

My thanks to John Manning for doing the bulk of the work on this edition. John has also

asked to extend his gratitude to Paul O'Hagan for his help in connecting with the Cloghogue champions. We plan at least one and possibly two more editions of Backspin before the end of the year and again if there is anyone out there with any suggestions or ideas for articles and features in future editions please let us know.

Until next time happy reading of this edition and good luck to all those competing in our upcoming events.

Yours in Sport,

Jason O'Connor

Communications & Press Officer
PPUI
0868048933

MAJOR UPCOMING FIXTURES AND DATES TO REMEMBER

Sept 2nd & 3rd	County Matchplay Finals @ Various Venues
Sept 9th & 10th	National Ladies & Gents Inter Counties @ Ryston
Sept 30th & Oct 1st	Leinster Gents Matchplay @ Navan Leinster Ladies Matchplay @ Castletown (Finals @ Navan) Munster Ladies & Gents Matchplay @ Bruff
Oct 14th	National Inter Club Finals