

BACKSPIN

Official E-Zine of the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland

June, 2017



PPUI

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- World Strokeplay in Norway Preview
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A Chara,

You are very welcome to this the second issue of Backspin for 2017. It's a shortened version for this edition but we hope to have longer versions for the remainder of the year. Despite the rain on Monday we have a very successful National Matchplay weekend at Tipperary Hills who proved to be excellent hosts on the weekend as John Ross Crangle of Loughlinstown ended Leinster's 14 year wait for a National Matchplay winner with his success over Ray Murphy in the Final as Portmarnock's Ger Ward continued her dominance of the Ladies event with her win over Chrissie Byrne.

We hope you enjoyed our coverage of the event on both the website and social media. Doing interviews with the players made it a lot more interactive and we had a great response to them. It's a model we hope to use going into future events. It's been a busy June in general with County, Regional Board and Provincial Strokeplays all taking place as the focus switches this weekend (**continued on last page**)



2017 National Matchplay winners Geraldine Ward (Portmarnock) and John Ross Crangle (Loughlinstown) with PPUI Honorary President Mervyn Cooney.

2017 Ladies National Strokeplay

By Jason O'Connor

A couple of weeks earlier than last year's staging, the National Ladies Strokeplay returns to being a two day event following last year's single day event in St Stephens. Communications & Press Officer Jason O'Connor takes a closer look at the entries in the three grades this weekend in Cement.

Junior

26 have entered for this year's grade with all hoping to be in the Top 8 for the playoff come Saturday afternoon. Local hopes will fall on two players namely Frances Farrell who tees-off in the second pairing alongside Catherine Fox of Glenville, a former National O-55's winner at Junior Ladies level. Wendy Mary Mooney

(second in the Class Two Section of the recent LDM Strokeplay) tees off in the second last pairing meanwhile as she plays with St Bridgets' Ann Sweeney who just missed out on winning the Kildare Strokeplay in a playoff with club-mate Dina Dillon. Dina is the reigning National Over-55's Champion at Junior level and she plays with Josie McCormack of Lakeside on Saturday.

Munster Ladies Strokeplay Champion Margaret Forde ventures up to Louth on the back of her win in ESB two weeks ago as runner-up from that event in Elaine Quinn also makes the trip up from Lakeside. Sive Shelley from the Templemore club recently won the Nett event at



PPUI Youth Officer Noel Collins presents Cian Murphy (St. Anne's) with the Munster u-16 Matchplay trophy after he overcame Dylan Seymour (Fermoy) at St. Anne's. Host club St. Anne's is represented at the prize ceremony by Chairman, Frank Dineen.

the Tipperary Strokeplay as Fermoy's Michelle Flynn is the other County Strokeplay Champion (Cork) at Junior level amongst the field teeing off alongside recent Leinster Mixed Foursomes winner Catherine Dillon of St Bridgets. Besides Cement all the other Louth entries are from Seapoint and McBride with Mary Coyle, Joanne Cooney and Bridie Hanratty from the Termonfeckin club entered and Audrey Donnelly representing McBride in proceedings. Erry's Ann Minogue is the other player entered who recently featured in the prizes at the County/Regional Board Strokeplays, second in the 7-13 grade in Offaly.

Bruff's Margaret O'Donovan and St Bridgets Gabrielle Sweeney will begin the grade while Meath duo Margaret De-

lahunty (Royal Meath) and Margaret Muldoon (Stackallen) will be the last two players to tee-off in the grade.

Intermediate

There are 36 entries for this year's grade with some interesting names in terms of former Seniors and former Juniors bidding to claim one of the eight spots on offer for the playoff initially. Two of the last three winners spring to mind initially in 2015 winner Mary Quinn of Lakeside and 2014 winner Mary Donnelly of Ryston. Mairead O'Toole of Poulaphouca was also a winner in this grade back in 2001 and she tee-offs alongside Mary with recent Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay winner Phil Condron of Lucan completing an interesting three-ball. The winner of the Munster Intermediate Strokeplay in



PPUI Munster coordinator, Mark Keohane & PPUI Development & Marketing Officer, Stephen Enneguess along with overall winners Vera McCarthy & Jim Aherne (Collins) and the other prize winners from the Munster Mixed Foursomes @ Lakewood.

Hillview's Pauline Lucey is also entered as she with another former winner of this event in Bridget Shelley of Lakeside as local player Marie Quinn certainly has some interesting playing partners.

After missing out to Pauline in a nine hole playoff in ESB two weeks ago Frances Ryan hopes to go one better this weekend in Louth as she plays with Gaeil Colmcille's Noreen Myles and Seapoint's Patricia Brennan. The third place finisher in ESB, former National Junior winner Sarah O'Neill is also entered this weekend as she plays with last year's Junior Champion in Mairead Manning from St Stephens as Marlo Everitt from Seapoint makes up this three-ball. Cement's second entry in this grade is Noelle Martin as she plays with Cork Intermediate Strokeplay Champion Ailish Sexton of Fermoy as well as Louise Grace of RGSC. The Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay Runner-Up from McDonagh, St Bridgets Catherine Smith is another entry as she will tee-off with former National Champion at Senior level Rose Kelly (Ryston) and Laytown's Ann Bird.

Collon's Mary Agnew will have the distinction of being the first Louth player to tee-off in the grade (in all there are eight of them entered) as she will play with

RGSC's Carol Tracey and St Bridgets' Elizabeth Smyth in the first three-ball. The second three ball featuring RGSC's Marie Dooley (Dublin Junior Ladies Strokeplay Runner-Up), Ryston's Margaret Keogh and Old County's Pauline Balfe will be worth watching as well. Bellewstown's Marie Black was second in the Meath Intermediate Strokeplay while another Meath player in Royal Meath's Theresa Fagan was amongst the prizes in the recent Leinster Mixed Foursomes.

She will play with her namesake Ann Fagan from Seapoint and former National Junior Strokeplay Champion in Mary Fullam of Shandon.

Senior

17 Ladies (12 from Leinster, five from Munster) are entered for the 2017 staging with last year's winner Breda White of Tipperary Hills the last to tee-off on Sunday morning. Breda's win last year in St Stephens was the first by a Munster player in this event for 24 years and after missing out on the final day in the National Matchplay on home turf, Breda will be anxious to make amends with a third place finish at the Munster Strokeplay in ESB her most recent competitive outing. Geraldine Ward was the victor in Tipp

Hills as we know but had a disappointing outing in McDonagh at the Leinster Strokeplay finishing outside the Top Three. She will be hoping to do much better in her bid for a third title in four years.

Chrissie Byrne finished strongly in McDonagh to claim the Leinster Strokeplay with Tara Dillon having to make do with second after leading the field at the halfway stage. Tara will tee-off with RGSC's Glenda Hoey in the second pairing with Collins' Linda Murphy Chrissie's playing partner in Louth. Dubliner's Maree O'Toole and Ger Holland will get Sunday morning's play underway as last year's National Intermediate winner Mary Murray of Rocklodge returns to the Senior grade with a Cork Senior Strokeplay title to go with a prize in the recent Munster Mixed Foursomes. She plays with a former National Intermediate Strokeplay winner in Helen Greagsbey as following reaching the Monday of the National Matchplay for the first time in Tipperary Hills, Lakeside's Martha O'Brien looks to build on a runners-up finish in the Munster Strokeplay.

Siobhan Keely of RGSC will be her playing partner as Munster Strokeplay winner Eleanor Walsh of Fermoy will play alongside Geraldine Ward for the first 36. After a good finish in St Stephens

last year in finishing second Marian Courtney returns with Lucan's Linda Thomson playing alongside her. Marian recently came third in the Leinster Strokeplay as the other two players in action on Sunday will be five time winner Margaret Hogan of Tullamore (winner of the recent Offaly Strokeplay) and 1995 winner Sheelagh Elmes of Portmarnock.

Different surrounds will bring different challenges for the Ladies much like last year in St Stephens. With no Louth player entered it will mean that no player can claim home advantage as such but whether Cement produces a fifth different winner of the event this decade remains to be seen in what should be a short and swift battle on Sunday.



Action from the Leinster Mixed foursomes held in Royal Meath. Catherine & Ian Dillon from St. Bridget's emerged victorious ahead of Maureen & Kevin Clarke, Kilbeggan.

2017 World Strokeplay Preview

By John Manning

A fourteen-strong cohort of Irish players will travel to the third World Strokeplay Championship in Norway next month. John Manning takes a look at the Irish contingent heading to the Scandinavian country for the 2017 staging.

Five-time individual Irish champion **John Walsh** is the holder of the World Strokeplay championship. The Collins man will defend the title he won four years ago at the Tambre course in Galicia. Walsh was also third in the inaugural World Strokeplay championship at La Grande Motte, France in 2009.

Walsh's two colleagues on Ireland's 2016 World Cup winning side will contest

the World Strokeplay. Recently crowned National Matchplay champion **John Ross Crangle** will have positive memories of Imjelt, host venue for the 2017 World Strokeplay. Crangle was runner-up (to Ian Farrelly) in the 2011 European Strokeplay championship, which was held there. JR just edged out John Walsh then for second spot on the tiebreaker. **Eamon Gibney** is a practised exponent of international Pitch and Putt. In addition to World Cup success in Andorra last year, Gibney won the 2014 Irish Open at Glenville and has been a podium finisher in previous Catalan (third, 2013) and British (second, 2016) Opens.

Reigning European and Irish Stroke-



Lucan Ladies Patricia Anderson (Junior) and Phil Condron (Intermediate) are presented with their prizes by PPUI Vice-President, Liam Sherry.



Michael Weldon speaking to the crowd at the recent PPUI / GCSAI Greenkeeping Seminar held at the Lakeside Club in Templemore. Over 35 Pitch & Putt Greenkeepers attended the seminar with presentations and demonstrations given by industry experts.

play champion **Liam O'Donovan** will travel to Norway on the back of the latest in a long line of overseas successes. The four-time European Team championship winner with Ireland teamed-up with **Pacelli Darcy** to clinch the recent World Pairs championship in Galicia. Darcy is the master of international seniors (over 55) Pitch and Putt and is the reigning European Seniors Strokeplay champion. A rival to Pacelli for the World Seniors crown will be Riverdale's **Sean Minogue**, a former National Matchplay semi-finalist and Inter-County winner with Tipperary. Minogue finished third in the seniors' categories of the 2016 Catalan, Irish and British Opens.

Reigning ladies' world champion Chrissie Byrne is unable to defend her title

but Ireland will have a strong hand in the 2017 renewal courtesy of Munster pair **Breda White** and **Eleanor Walsh**. Breda was the 2016 National Ladies and National Senior Ladies Strokeplay champion. The Tipperary Hills star also won the Irish Open at Rocklodge last autumn. Three-time Irish individual champion Eleanor Walsh clinched the recent Munster Strokeplay championship at E.S.B. Breda and Eleanor were second and third respectively in last year's British Open at Central Park in Dagenham. Old County's **Stephen Murray**, the reigning Dublin Strokeplay champion, has been close twice in international events. Stephen and club-mate Paul McGreal were runners-up in the 2016 Catalan International Pairs tournament at Sant Cebria. Murray contested a play-off for the 2010 Irish Open at R.G.S.C., before losing

out to **Frank Dineen**.

Frank is a two-time Irish Open champion, having won again at Rocklodge in 2016. Frank was recently 2017 Munster Strokeplay runner-up after a titanic sudden death battle with Bryan Delaney. 2008 National Strokeplay champion Dineen has contested the two previous World Strokeplay championships, finishing tied fifth at Tambre in 2013 and eleventh at La Grande Motte four years earlier. The St. Anne's personality is another with experience of Imjelt as he was fifth at the Drammen venue in the 2011 European Strokeplay championship. 2016 National Matchplay champion **Shane Murphy** put in a strong defence of his title at Tipperary Hills recently, reaching the last eight. Shane was runner-up in last year's Catalan Open.

Shane's father **Weeshie Murphy** is a regular competitor in international events and was second in the 2015 Catalan International Pairs tournament at Lloret Papalus alongside Chris Scannell. **Mark Millar** has been showing signs of a return to the form that won the successive National Matchplay championships of 2001 and 2002. An Inter-County winner with Louth and an Inter-County runner-up with Dublin, the 2000 Leinster Matchplay

champion was tied tenth behind John Walsh at Tambre four years ago.

Listowel native **Declan McCarron** was playing out of Tralee when he became National Intermediate Strokeplay champion at Ryston in 2010. The Kerry Inter-County player recently won the 2017 Kerry County Strokeplay championship at the Deerpark club in Killarney.



2017 Leinster u-16 Strokeplay winner, Evan Carry (Castletown) is presented with the trophy by former PPUi President and competition sponsor, Eamonn Birchall.

Cement P&P Club, Drogheda

By John Manning

Ahead of hosting the 2017 National Ladies Strokeplay Championships this weekend, John Manning takes a closer look at host club Cement which is celebrating its 45th year in existence this year.

The idea of a Pitch and Putt course at Mell, Drogheda surfaced in 1969. Three years of hard work followed. Cement Pitch & Putt club was founded in 1972 and immediately affiliated to the PPUI. An immaculate course occupies six acres on Cement road on the north side of Drogheda town. The attractively laid-out holes present the full gamut of Pitch and Putt challenges, ranging from 36 metres to the monster 18th at 68 metres. The current course record is 39.

Legendary player and reigning National Matchplay champion Geraldine Ward won the Leinster Ladies Strokeplay at Cement five years ago. “I like Cement. It’s a very tough, challenging course, says Ger. “It’s a real pitching course. Cement has four of the toughest finishing holes you can get. You have the long sixteenth and the 18th is a very tough hole.” Kevin McDonnell’s name shines brightly in the annals of Cement Pitch and Putt club. Kevin was National Strokeplay champion

in 1978 and National Matchplay kingpin the following year. Ray Matthews came very close to emulating his friend and more celebrated club-mate. The 1978 Leinster Matchplay winner (Cement’s first provincial champion) was the first player in history to lose two National Gents Matchplay Finals.

Having installed an automatic watering system in 1980, Cement was the winner of the inaugural PPUI Course of the Year award (Clubs over 100 members) in 1990. The club’s impressive first crack at national championship hosting was the 1980 Inter-County. Dublin won the Ladies and Kildare the Gents. Ger Ward is looking forward to Cement becoming the first Co. Louth club to welcome the National



2017 Leinster Ladies Senior Champion Chrissie Byrne (Ryston) being presented with her prize by PPUI Vice-President Liam Sherry



PPUI National Competition coordinator, Myles McMorrow and Munster coordinator, Mark Keohane pictured with the prize winners from the Munster Ladies Strokeplay @ ESB. Eleanor Walsh (Fermoy) retained her title in the Senior Grade with Pauline Lucey (Hillview) and Margaret Forde (Riverdale) victorious in the Intermediate and Junior grades respectively

Ladies Strokeplay championship. “Cement will be in fabulous condition. They look after it brilliantly.” Indeed over the years, the Cement complex at Fountain Hill has been something of a mecca for Pitch & Putt aficionados.

Central Council were back at Cement for the 1984 National Mixed Foursomes. Una and Enda Pyke of Tullamore were very impressive winners. Peter McGuinness from neighbouring Seapoint took the 1986 National Gents Strokeplay championship at Cement after an absorbing battle with Barry Morrissey (Carrigaline). There were Cork winners in the other grades – Carrigaline’s Gavin Farrissey (Intermediate) and Richard Jordan of Pfizer (Junior). Sean Harkins celebrated the second his three National

Gent’s Matchplay Championship successes at Cement in 1991. It was the era of the graded Matchplays and Cement provided their own champions in the shape of Charlie McGrath (Intermediate) and Eugene Smith (Junior).

The club hosted International Pitch & Putt on 15th August 1993. The inaugural match between Ireland and Australia was won by the hosts, 563 to 656. Cement’s own Johnny Campbell Junior starring for Ireland. Kilbeggan won the 1993 Carrolls Club Tournament (an event Cement teams claimed twice in the 1980s) at Cement just ahead of Seapoint and Lakeside. The legendary Ray Hanratty (RIP) was a marvellous Secretary and Greenkeeper at Cement for many years. Ray’s greatest day on the course to be a member of the Cement Carrolls Club

Tournament winning quartet at Catholic Institute in 1984.

There was plenty of Louth success at the 1995 Juvenile Weekend in Cement. Damien Rafferty from neighbouring Seapoint took the Boys' title and Damien headlined Louth's first-ever (and to date only) victory in the Inter-County championship. The exceptional Bernadette Coffey won the second of her three Girls' gold medals. Having joined Cement in 1980, Pitch & Putt video coverage pioneer Ben Lennon won the National Junior Strokeplay championship at Collinstown in 1981. Ben served on Cement Club

Committee and became Secretary of the Louth/Down Regional Board in 1990. He was elected National Registrar in 1991. During his seven-year term in the post, Ben introduced many innovations including the first ever computerised database of membership.

This weekend will be the first time the club has hosted a National Championship since 2011 when the O-55's events were played in Drogheda. Club icon Johnny Campbell won the Gents senior while Marie Quinn lost to Kathleen Grendon in a Ladies Intermediate play-off.



PPUI Honorary President, Mervyn Cooney pictured alongside 2017 National Matchplay winner Geraldine Ward (Portmarnock), runner-up Chrissie Byrne (Ryston) and semi-finalists Martha O'Brien (Lakeside) & Tara Dillon (Ryston)

BACKSPIN PRODUCTION TEAM

Jason O'Connor, John Manning, and Paul Hayes

(continued from first page) to the National Ladies Strokeplay in Cement. John Manning profiles the host club for this weekend's action while there is also a preview of the three grades themselves this weekend.

John also has a preview of next weekend's World Strokeplay Championships in Imjelt, Norway where defending Gents Champion John Walsh will head the field at the event.

A lot will take place over the coming weeks at adult, U-16 and Seniors level as the playing season reaches its apex. We encourage all clubs to consider entry to the National Inter-Club events this year which is open until August 30th this year

and offers events at Scratch Gents, Nett Gents and Ladies levels.

We intend to have another edition of Backspin out at the end of August and anyone with any ideas for articles is welcome to contact us for consideration of same.

Until next time,

Jason O'Connor

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MAJOR UPCOMING FIXTURES AND DATES TO REMEMBER

- July 1st to 2nd:** Ladies National Strokeplay @ Cement
- July 7th to 9th:** World Individual Strokeplay @ Imjelt, Norway
- July 15th to 16th:** Gents National Strokeplay @ Hillview
- July 8th:** Munster u-16 Strokeplay @ Deerpark
- July 8th to 9th:** Leinster u-16 Matchplay @ Bagenalstown
- July 29th to 30th:** P.J. & Catherine Bell Seniors National Championships
- July 29th to 30th:** Under 16 National Matchplay @ St. Stephen's