

BACKSPIN

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

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PPUI

Issue Highlights:

- PPUi President
- Ger Ward, Bryan Delaney, Barry O'Neill & Evan Carry
- Catalan Open
- Plus More...

A Chara,

You are welcome to this our first edition of Backspin for 2019. It's a poignant issue in one sense as it marks the last one that will be designed by our outgoing Development Manager Paul Hayes who is leaving us for pastures new with Horse Sport Ireland.

I will speak more about Paul towards the end of this piece but this issue aims to achieve one of the ambitions of the new Ladies & U-16 Sub Committee to have a specific issue focused solely on these two aspects of our game. We had intended to bring this edition out on Holy Thursday last for Easter but unfortunately it had to be delayed until now.

I welcome Declan Sheedy's initiative in trying to get this Committee active in our game and it is envisaged that they will be taking the lead on covering events involving Ladies & U-16's in the coming season. Following on from our streaming of the National Gents Matchplay Final last year on Facebook it is our intention to stream the Ladies Scratch Final though the new Ladies & U-16 page the PPUi has created on the same social media platform.

This edition sees John Manning focus on the recent Catalan Open from *(continued on last page)*



PPUI Honorary President, Mervyn Cooney addressing the PPUi Annual Convention held recently at Templemore Arms, Hotel, Co. Tipperary. A message from the President as he begins his new 3-year term is available on page 2.

Some Words From Our President

by Mervyn Cooney

As we look forward to what hopefully will be a really successful Pitch & Putt season, I am taking this opportunity to reflect on some recent happenings and to look forward to the Championship season.

First of all, I want to pay tribute to our Development Manager Paul Hayes who is leaving us shortly. I want to thank him for his contribution to our sport since he joined our team. Paul has worked on numerous programmes for us. He has been instrumental in introducing many new initiatives and has worked tirelessly on implementing our strategic plan and having us compliant with Sport Ireland's governance code by the end of 2019. His work has taken him to many of our clubs and boards and he helped build a strong bond between them and the PPUI, and I know they very much appreciated his efforts.

I want to look back to our recent Convention and once again offer my sincere apologies to our members for my uncharacteristic error of judgement in relation to the election of the Vice President, and the subsequent necessity for an EGM. I very much appreciated the support I received from delegates at the EGM and despite some criticism of how the EGM was called; I firmly believe my interpretation of the Constitution on this occasion was correct.

Convention saw several changes to the constitution and the rules of play let's take a brief look at some of them. The change to 9.1 (optional use of a third club) is probably the most significant, the last number of Conventions have seen motions come before delegates seeking a change. It has gone from being heavily defeated to a nar-

row margin of rejection and this year delegates voted in favour of change. I know the change has caused some members to take to social media to voice their opposition to this change.

As a sport our age demographic continues to rise, and while every effort is being made to address this, it is fact of life for us at present. As we age, we may not be able to hit our wedge or whatever club we use as far as we once did, and we may need the use of an extra club to help us play and continue as members of Pitch & Putt Ireland. I realise it is one of the most significant changes since 1960 and therefore it is understandable that it would cause some debate, but let's give it a chance, and if it helps to keep people playing Pitch and Putt it will have made a difference.

A number of other changes to the Rules of Play also came into effect on April 10th, all clubs have been notified and I would appeal to members to familiarise themselves with the changes by logging on to our website, they are available in the Downloads section.

In the last two years we have experimented with different types of starts to some of our major championships. This was for two main reasons. Along with my NEC colleagues I wanted more players to experience playing in provincial and national events and to also try and make the day more player friendly. We live in an age where people have to prioritise their time around work and family commitments and if we can help by organising competitions in a way that allow players plan their day then we should try to do this.



PPUI President Mervyn Cooney with PPUI Patron Peg Smith and her husband John, pictured at this years Annual Convention where Peg was elected as PPUI Patron

I am also a democrat, and it was clear from our recent Convention that starts other than from the first tee are not popular with our members. This caused problems with our first event of the year when we had to limit the Provincial Matchplay to 16 finalists in each grade, it would be impossible to complete the event with 96 finalists without a shotgun start, but we will look at ways of increasing the number of finalists for 2020. I want to clarify that the National Strokeplay will have similar numbers to last year despite the predictions of some Facebook contributors; there will be minor changes to the number qualifying for the final round in each grade of the gents. We will also have a 36 nett prize in all grades, and this will also be the case in the Provincial Strokeplay.

The Ladies and Juvenile committee continues its work towards the improvement of numbers in both of these sections. It is proving difficult to get increased entries in our Ladies events; this year is seeing a continuation of the downward trend. I know the committee under the chairmanship of Declan Sheedy are very anxious to start a debate with ladies regarding what type of events appeal to them. I encourage all ladies to interact with the committee and get the debate started.

In an effort to encourage our Intermediate and Junior Ladies to participate in the Provincial Inter Counties it has been decided that both these grades will be run as a nett Stableford event. On a positive note it is encouraging to see clubs become active once again in trying ways of encouraging more U-16's to take up Pitch & Putt. I wish

them well and assure them of NEC support.

I am a great believer in debate, and people having opportunities to voice their opinion but I would ask contributors to Facebook to exclude references to our staff in their contributions. It is very obvious from even a cursory glance at our audited accounts that there are no gravy trains operating within our sport.

The members of the NEC put themselves forward for election and therefore will be subject to criticism if decisions made don't find favour with some sections of our membership. This is perfectly natural but again let's be measured in our comments.

I look forward to meeting lots of our players together with Club and Board officers on the many long and enjoyable days that are ahead for everyone as we set on the Championship road of 2019.

Lig dúinn oibriú le chéile le haghaidh ár spórt.

Mervyn

Mervyn Cooney

PPUI President



2019 PPUI Hall of Fame recipient was Helen McMorrow (RIP). Pictured receiving the commendation from PPUI President, Mervyn Cooney is Myles McMorrow alongside fellow Lakeside P&P Club members Martha & Lilly O'Brien

Norma O'Brien

By John Manning

In February 2000, The Backspin magazine feature "Pitch and Putt Ladies Players of the 20th Century" included Norma O'Brien of Douglas at No. 7. Three-time national individual champion Norma enjoyed a relatively brief but hugely successful career in Pitch and Putt as John Manning explains in this profile.

1991 and 1992 National Strokeplay champion and 1991 National Matchplay champion, Norma was Ireland's No. 1 ranked lady player for three consecutive years in 1991, 1992 and 1993.

It all started for Norma O'Brien at Fermoy in 1985 when the Douglas player scored 107 to head Colette Kenny (St. Finbarr's) by seven strokes and become the Munster Ladies Intermediate Strokeplay champion. A first All-Ireland success arrived in the John Player National Mixed Foursomes at St. Patrick's on Sunday 25 September 1988 when Norma combined with Douglas club-mate Finbarr O'Donnell for a +10 return, which defeated Denise Galvin & Enda Pyke

(Tullamore) on the countback.

Norma had joined the senior grade ranks by 1990 when her 112 tally at Larkspur Park gave her runners-up slot in the Munster Ladies Strokeplay to Breda Lonergan (Tipperary Hills). In 1992 at Collins, she won the Munster Ladies Strokeplay championship for the first time when her 102 aggregate gave her five strokes to spare over Eleanor Walsh (Fermoy). Norma retained her title in the 1993 Munster Ladies Strokeplay at Tralee, with an eight under par total of 100, three ahead of Eleanor Walsh.

A beautifully controlled pitching performance on 7 July 1991 won the National Ladies Strokeplay crown for Norma O'Brien. The Douglas player carded 101 around St Lomans to beat Una Pyke (Tullamore) by four shots. It was a quick double for Norma O'Brien when she won an all-Cork National Matchplay final at Lakewood on 28th July. A three-footer on the last green gave



Norma O'Brien pictured alongside former PPUI Honorary President Aiden O'Brien (Skryne P&P Club)



Norma O'Brien lines up a shot, pictured in the early 1990's

her victory by the narrowest of margins (1up) over E.S.B.'s Eileen Buckley. Norma then became the second player (after Clare Foley Keating) to win maiden Matchplay and Strokeplay titles in a single year. Unusually, the Strokeplay was held before the Matchplay that year.

At the time, Norma was the third different player (Clare Keating and Teresa McGuigan were the others) to win the National Ladies Strokeplay and Matchplay in the same year. That trio were later joined by Geraldine Ward, Peggy Campbell and Tracey McGrath. On 5 July 1992, she celebrated her Birthday and shot 97 over her home course at Douglas to win the National Ladies Strokeplay championship and her third national Ladies Championship in-a-row. Jean Cooney (then of Bissell) was runner-up on 100.

Norma went close in the Sunday World National Matchplay Championship at Hillview on July on 24/25 1993, but lost the final by 3&2 to Geraldine Ward (Portmarnock). She fired 107 at Rocklodge to win the 1989 Cork Ladies Stroke-

play championship by a single shot from Eileen Buckley (ESB). Norma regained the Cork Ladies Strokeplay title two years later when her 98 tally at Douglas was six clear of runner-up Eleanor Walsh (Fermoy)

Another County Strokeplay title was bagged at St. Anne's in 1993 when Norma's 100 total ended-up four better than Eileen Buckley (E.S.B.). Norma was crowned 1992 Cork County Matchplay Champion at St. Stephen's. Married to 1990 National Gents Strokeplay champion William Hill; Norma retired from Pitch and Putt in 1994.

Just the previous autumn, Norma had scored a best of the day 99 as she joined Eleanor Walsh, Lily Carroll, Rose Scanlon and Eileen Buckley in a Cork total of 407 at Lakewood that won the National Ladies Inter-County Championship by 13 shots from Dublin.

Norma had also helped Cork to the 1986 Munster Ladies Inter-County championship at Ardnacrusha.

International Calendar

By John Manning

The 2019 international calendar looks like it will deliver the busiest year yet on the global Pitch and Putt scene John Manning writes in this piece as he looks at the events already played in Japan and Brazil as well.

The year has already got to a momentous start on the other side of the world. The inaugural Japanese Open was played at the Otake course in Fukuoka from March 15th-17th. Shinobu Kobayashi (Japan) scored a brilliant 48 final round to win by a single stroke from fellow Japan player Kenichi Ryu, who had led by three overnight. Shinobu Kobayashi's 54-hole aggregate was a 12 under par 150. Kenichi Ryu carded 52 on Sunday for his 151 total. Yuji Matsuda (Japan) finished third on 157 after closing with a 55. Ami Kumazawa (Japan) scored a level par 162 total to win the ladies Japanese Open by a shot from fellow Japanese Yuri Onishi. Mizuki Yoshioka (Japan) was third on 167.

Further new ground was broken on March 30th/31st when the first-ever Brazil Open was played at the Sitio Sao Luiz course, which is located at Novo Hamburgo, Rio Grande Do Sul, some 1,000 kilometres from the capital Sao Paulo. The Brazil Open saw the latest step in the continued development of our sport in South America, which will shortly see Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador join Chile as members of FIPPA. Chile's Gustavo Cortez won the inaugural Brazil Open, firing 57 on Sunday to post a 36-hole aggregate of 119, which was three strokes clear of first round leader Alex Lemes (Brazil) who matched his Saturday score of 61 in the final round. Paolo Jovane (Brazil) scored 125 to

finish third. Ladies champion was Susana Wozniak (Argentina), who totalled 160 to 176 for her Argentinian colleague Amanda Speranza.

See separate article on Catalan Open (April 26/28).

May 10th/11th will see only the second ever Norwegian Open, which will be staged at the Bryne Kro course near Stavanger. From June 1st/2nd, the contestants in the Andorra International Pairs will line up at the Xixerella course (which has been the host venue for both the World Cup and European team championship in the past). Another new international open will take place in France from June 7th-9th when the inaugural Brittany Open will be held at Quiberon.

Andorra, Galicia, holders Catalonia and France are expected to dispute honours in the 2019 Quadrangular International, which is down for



Juvenile Opens coming up this Summer



Bird's eye view of the pitch and putt course in Dagenham, host venue of the 2019 European Strokeplay Championship

decision at Urduna (the scenic course in the Basque Country where Ireland were crowned 2018 European Team champions) from July 27th /28th.

Irish Gents will be hoping to continue their domination of the European Strokeplay Championship from August 16th-18th at Dagenham. Liam O'Donovan (Bruff) will put his title on the line in an event, which will undoubtedly feature a number of Ireland's top players, including 2013 World Strokeplay champion John Walsh. Players such as Breda White, Mary Murray and Eleanor Walsh will seek to be the first Irish lady to win a European Strokeplay championship title.

An old favourite returns to the calendar on August 23rd-25th. With the PPBN back in FIPPA, the Dutch Open will be played at Oirschot, near Eindhoven. There is quite an Irish presence on the Dutch Open Roll of Honour with St Anne's player Ray Murphy a former three-time winner while John Walsh (Collins) was champion at Molenhoek six years ago. Ian Farrelly

(Bellewstown) triumphed at Busloo in 2009 meanwhile.

The Andorra Open on September 14th-15th switches from Xixerella to neighbouring Ordino while the previous week's (September 7/8) Slovenia Open will also have a new venue – Stanežiče in the nation's capital Ljubljana. From September 27th/29th the Swiss Open will take place at Rottal while Sant Cebria will again be the host venue of the Catalan International Pairs from October 26th/27th. Tom Hanley and Kieran Earls won the latter event for Ireland in 2016 while Liam O'Donovan and Pacelli Darcy were victorious in 2014.

Ireland's David O'Leary contested the 2018 Australian Open. The 2019 renewal is scheduled for November 16th/17th at Waverley (Melbourne).

A European club championship is also planned for Tambre, Galicia from October 4th/6th.

Geraldine Ward—Portmarnock P&P Club

By John Manning

2019 could be a momentous year for Ireland's most successful Ladies player ever Ger Ward of Portmarnock. John Manning takes a look back at the humble origins of the numbers behind her stellar career.

Geraldine Ward first burst into national prominence at Fermoy on a September day in 1981 and she has gone on to become the most decorated player in Ladies Pitch & Putt history. The then Miss McLernon scored 107 to finish second at Fermoy in that year's National Ladies Intermediate Strokeplay championship, four strokes adrift of Dunlops player Maura McNally.

It wasn't long before the Portmarnock club member was making waves at the top level of Ladies Pitch & Putt and currently holds a stash of records. She was crowned National Matchplay Champion for the first time at Hillview in 1984 and she completed a three-in-a-row at Waterford Glass in 1986. She is still the reigning National Matchplay Champion and has compiled a triplet of three-in-a-rows en route to

an unbelievable total of 12 Matchplay titles, amassed across 35 years. She has also been a losing finalist on four occasions.

Geraldine annexed her maiden National Ladies Strokeplay championship at Listowel in 1994 and secured her tenth title at Collins in July 2018. She has also been runner-up four times. Ger also holds the record for the longest span between first and most recent winning appearance in the National Matchplay – 34 years (1984-2018). She has achieved the National Matchplay/National Matchplay double in a single year four times - 1994, 2007, 2017 and 2018. She has been the No 1 rated player in the Pitch & Putt Union of Ireland Rankings at year end 11 times since the system was launched in 1991.

Ger was crowned Leinster Ladies Strokeplay queen for the first time with a return of 102 at Royal Meath in 1985 and she has since helped herself to no fewer than another seven provincial strokeplay crowns, the most recent at Gowran in 2018. The accomplished Dublin exponent has



Portmarnock P&P legend, Geraldine Ward is profiled for this edition of Backspin by John Manning

also been Leinster Ladies Matchplay champion on four occasions. Her first win was at Ierne 30 years ago and she also won at Gaeil Colmcille (1994), Glenville (1995) and most recently at Stackallen (2005).

She won her first National Inter-County championship with Dublin at Irish Ropes in 1985 and has since participated in another 13 metropolitan triumphs, giving her a record 14 gold medals. The Portmarnock powerhouse has matched that in the Leinster Inter-County Championship, in which she also boasts 14 winners' gongs. There are also multiple Dublin County Matchplay and Strokeplay championships on her résumé as well as Dublin County League titles with Portmarnock.

Winner of the Irish International Ladies Open at Seapoint in 2018, Ger has represented Ireland on numerous occasions, ever since her debut against the touring Catalans in millennium year. Her individual international record is: Foursomes - W5-L2-H0; Fourballs - W4-L2-H0; Sin-

gles - W5-L2-H1. Four players have won the National Ladies Strokeplay, the National Ladies Matchplay and the National Ladies Inter-County on the same course - Teresa McGuigan at Ierne, Bernadette Coffey at Ryston, Clare Keating at Hillview and Ger Ward at Tullamore.

The National Ladies Matchplay at Rocklodge this year presents Ger with the opportunity to become the first player to win all three on two different courses as she already won the National Strokeplay (2008) and Inter-County (2001) at Rocklodge. Her only win in Cork in the National Inter-County championship was that Rocklodge success 18 years ago.

Ger has won the National Matchplay Championship at venues practically all over the country but interestingly never yet in Cork although four of her 10 National Strokeplay successes have been Leeside - at Collins in 2018, at Lakewood in 2003, at Rocklodge in 2008 and at Fermoy in 2014.



Pacelli Darcy, Bruff P&P Club who was third in the Senior Classification at this years Catalan Open

Catalan Open 2019

By John Manning

John Manning looks back at last weekend's Catalan Open from an Irish perspective

41 Irish players made the trip to Portal del Roc, a fine course situated south of Barcelona, for the 2019 Catalan Open (April 27th/28th), the 13th staging of this prestigious international event. Although Liam O'Donovan led overnight into the final round, the main prize eluded the Irish raiders on this occasion. However, Dennis Monaghan and Glenn Towler were victorious in the Over 55 and Under 18 categories respectively.

Dennis, an Inter-County winner with Dublin and twice winner of the National Mixed Foursomes in partnership with his wife Dolores, scored 53 in Saturday morning's opening round. That left him three behind the first round Over 55's leader Michel Espanol (France). A second eighteen 51 moved former Dublin champion Dennis up to joint second overnight, alongside

fellow Irishman Pacelli Darcy together with Catalans Eusebio Marin and Antonio Mateo.

That quartet was two strokes behind 36-hole leader Antonio Garcia. The Shandon maestro closed with a 52 on Sunday for a six under par 156 aggregate, to just hold off the fast finishing Felicísimo Aparicio (Catalonia) who carded a final round 51. Pacelli Darcy and Eusebio Marin also returned 157, with Pacelli earning third spot on the tiebreaker. Irish juvenile international, former National Boys' Matchplay Champion and multiple Munster Under 16 title winner Glenn Towler (St. Anne's) tallied impressive rounds of 52, 55 and 56 to clinch the Under 18 category prize.

Bruff's Liam O'Donovan, a former two-time winner of the Catalan Open (2013 and 2015) scored 48 and 52 on Saturday to hold a one stroke advantage on eight under par with a



Prize winners from the 2019 Catalan Open



Bruff P&P player Thomas Hanley followed up on his 2018 victory with fourth place at the 2019 Catalan Open

round to play. However, there was to be no denying World Strokeplay champion Amador Rodriguez, who blitzed the Portal del Roc course with a best of the weekend 45. Rodriguez, who was third in this event at Vallromanes a year ago, returned a 16 under par total of 146 to beat fellow Catalan Enric Sanz (the 2017 winner) by five strokes.

Another Bruff player, Tommy Hanley, the holder of the Catalan Open title, delivered a noble defense of his crown. Tommy, who also starred on Spanish soil last year in Ireland's European Team Championship triumph, posted eighteens of 50, 51 and 53 to end up in fourth place. Liam O'Donovan closed with a 55 to tie for fifth place, only to lose out on the countback. His Saturday morning 48 had seen Liam lead after the first round. At that stage, he was just a single shot clear of Rocklodge's Garrett O'Mahony, who posted a fine 49 opener.

There were no podium finishes for the Irish ladies although noteworthy performances were delivered by Breda White (Tipperary Hills) and Mary Murray (Rocklodge). World Over 55s Strokeplay champion Breda was consistency personified, carding rounds of 57+56+58 for a 171 total in fourth place. National Over 55s champion Mary Murray was equally consistent with the Rocklodge lady finishing sixth after returning 58+59+58 for her 175 aggregate.

Catalonia's Gloria Ruiz won the Catalan Open for the third successive year with a 54-hole tally of 165, two ahead of Dutch lady Herma Kleinlugtenbeld and three clear of the evergreen Pilar Montero (Catalonia).

Bryan Delaney—Bishopstown

By John Manning

Following recognition at the recent PPUI Convention for his on course achievements in 2018, John Manning profiles our No 1 ranked Gents player, Bryan Delaney, in the following piece.

Wins in the 2019 Cork County Strokeplay and the Cork County Matchplay allied to his superb victory in the National Matchplay at Tullamore see Bryan Delaney (Bishopstown) top the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland rankings for the first time ever.

Some of the best moments in Bryan Delaney's Pitch and Putt life have arrived at the Tralee course. A single stroke clear on 94 heading into the final round of the 2009 National Strokeplay championship at Tralee, Delaney fired an ultra-impressive 47 to prevail by two shots over John Walsh (Collins). Less than two years after his National Strokeplay triumph, Bryan was back in Tralee to represent Ireland in the

2011 International against Catalonia, winning 2.5 points out of a possible three in a home country victory.

Bryan teamed-up with Offaly's Tracey McGrath in the fourballs that week to eke out a very valuable halved match with 2009 World Strokeplay Champion Fernando Cano and Paco Salido. Bryan's foursomes partner was Paul O'Brien (Lakeside) and the Cork/Tipperary combination beat Marc Lloret and Marçal Moré by 7&6. Bryan Delaney again faced Marc Lloret in the singles and ran out a 2&1 victor over the man who has won World Cup and European Championship medals with Catalonia. In 2018, Bryan Delaney starred for Ireland as the men in green regained the European team title for the first time in eleven years at Urduna in the Basque Country.

Since their 2009 duel at Tralee, Bryan Delaney and John Walsh have locked horns sev-



2018 PPUI National Matchplay winners, Ger Ward (Scratch Ladies), Elaine Quinn (Nett Ladies) and Bryan Delaney (Gents), pictured with PPUI Honorary President Mervyn Cooney



2018 No 1 Gents Player Bryan Delaney receives his trophy from PPUi President Mervyn Cooney at this year Annual Convention

eral times at the business end of major championships and the Collins man has invariably (just about) held sway. On an unseasonably cold and wet June day, Bryan was 2015 National Matchplay runner-up to John Walsh at Lakeside. The margin was tight – just one hole.

Delaney returned 139 in the 2015 Munster Strokeplay Championship at Riverdale, which left him second, two strokes behind John Walsh. Walsh and Delaney engaged in a titanic battle for the 2016 Munster Matchplay Championship at Lakeside. John Walsh eventually beat Bryan Delaney at the 40th in that final. It was mighty-close between the pair again at the 2016 Munster Strokeplay Championship at St. Anne's. John Walsh overcame Bryan Delaney in a play-off after a tie on 140.

Bryan had previously been Munster Strokeplay runner-up at ESB in 2008 when his 140 aggregate fell just single stroke shy of Templebreedy's Frank O'Donoghue. Bryan atoned

for some of those heart-breaking provincial near misses with an exciting success in the 2017 Munster Strokeplay Championship at E.S.B. Delaney outlasted Frank Dineen (St. Annes) and John Cahill in extra holes after the trio had tied on 141.

He signed for 101 on his National Inter-County Championship debut at Cloghogue in 2009. That was Cork's second-best score as the Leesiders won on 402. In all, Bryan boasts seven Inter-County wins, having also lifted the Anchor Cup with the Rebels in 2018, 2017, 2015, 2014, 2011 and 2010. Likewise, Bryan has tasted Munster Inter-County glory with Cork in 2009, 2011 and during the 2014-17 four-in-row.

Twice Cork Matchplay runner-up in the past, Bryan finally claimed the Cork Matchplay Championship title in 2017, defeating Ray Murphy in the final at Rocklodge. Bryan Delaney learned the sport of Pitch & Putt at ESB in Cork City. He retains close links with and is still a member of the South Douglas Road club but later registered with Fermoy to maximise his opportunities in scratch team events. This was rewarded by National Inter-Club wins with Fermoy in 2016 and 2017.

A prolific Scratch Cup contender and winner, Bryan was also crowned Cork Gents' Strokeplay champion at St. Stephen's in 2015. Delaney first made the National Strokeplay Championship Final Round in 2008 and has since qualified on six more occasions. He's finished in the Top 10 five times, including a fifth-place finish at Glenville last year.

He is also a four-time National Matchplay semi-finalist in his still relatively young career.

St. Anne's P&P Club, Shanakiel, Cork

By John Manning

At a pleasant function at the Commons Inn Hotel in January, St. Anne's Pitch and Putt club was awarded a Cork & Northside Sport Award in recognition of the community club's successes over many years writes John Manning

The Cork & Northside Sport Awards are co-ordinated by Sean O'Sullivan and sponsored by Gurranebraher Credit Union in association with media sponsor Red FM.

St Annes won recognition as the December 2018 award, which was sponsored by Singletons SuperValu, Hollyhill. St Annes clinched the Cork County Senior League in 2018 for the eighth time in nine years. The St Annes squad was Frank Dineen, Ray Murphy, Kieran Dunscombe, Liam Myers, Darren Collins, Tadgh Murphy, John O'Sullivan, David Doyle, Brian

Barry and Michael Long.

The club was founded in July 1966. Founder members Vincent and Phil Allen were present at the Awards ceremony, which was addressed by Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork Thomas Gould, the CEO of Gurranebraher Credit Union Philip Hosford, Colm O'Sullivan (of Red FM), Cork County Board Pitch and Putt Chairman Mark Keohane and Frank Dineen (on behalf of St. Annes).

St. Annes contributed hugely on the administration side of Pitch and Putt. The late Liam Houlihan was twice President of the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland and served on the National Executive for 17 years. Phil and Vincent Allen were regulars on Cork County Boards and Munster Council. Junior Ryan was an effective



St. Anne's Club Secretary Frank Dineen receives the Cork & Northside Sport Award in recognition of the community club's successes over many years.

Cork County Board Chairman and an industrious member of the PPUI NEC. Long serving Club President Bernard Allen was a prominent TD and Minister of Sport. Vincent Allen is a patron of PPUI.

St Annes boasted a string of National Pitch and Putt champions down through the years:

- John Drinan – National Junior Strokeplay Champion 1977
- Ann Ginnane – National Juvenile Strokeplay Champion 1977, National Strokeplay Champion 1980, 1981, 1983; National Matchplay Champion 1982
- John O’Neill - National Strokeplay Champion 1981
- Donal Long – National Strokeplay Champion – 1983
- Tony Wall – National Junior Strokeplay Champion 1984
- Marie Allen – National Ladies Strokeplay Champion 1985
- Roy Sisk – National Junior Strokeplay Champion 1988
- Richard Cunningham – National Junior Strokeplay Champion 1989
- Chris O’Shaughnessy - - National Strokeplay Champion 1989
- Michael O’Connell – National Juvenile Strokeplay Champion 1991
- Darren Collins – National Intermediate Strokeplay Champion 1993, National Strokeplay Champion 2003, National Matchplay Champion 2005

- Frank Dineen – National Strokeplay Champion 2008
- Ryan Towler – National Juvenile Strokeplay Champion 2015
- Ray Murphy – National Matchplay & Strokeplay Champion 2013

St. Annes won the inaugural Senior and Inter/Junior national Inter-Club at Bruff in 2013 and retained the senior crown at Tullamore the following year.

Four St Annes members entered the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland Hall of Fame – Liam Houlihan, Chris O’Shaughnessy, Vincent Allen and Junior Ryan. No club has provided more inductees into the PPUI Hall of Fame than St Annes.

St. Anne’s has hosted many championships – county, provincial, national over the years. All Irelands in St. Anne’s were:



Glenn Towler (St. Anne’s) receives his prize for the best u-18 at the 2019 Catalan Open

- National Ladies Matchplay – 1972, 1980
- National Mixed Foursomes – 1974
- National Strokeplay – 1976, 1984, 1988
- Carrolls Club Tournament 1978
- National Juvenile Strokeplay - 1978
- Inter-County - 2010

Eugene McCarthy (after whom the National Juvenile Strokeplay trophy is named) was Juvenile President and Coach at St. Anne's for many

years. He nurtured talents like four time All Ireland adult champion (and first All-Ireland Girls champion) Ann Ginnane and John O'Neill, among others.

St Annes played host to the 1983 International match in which Ireland defeated England. Donal Long (St. Annes) represented Ireland in that match, as did John O'Neill in the 1982 match at Nuneaton.

Overseas, St. Anne's members Ray Murphy and Darren Collins have won International Opens in Holland while Frank Dineen is a two-time winner of the Irish Open.

Ladies & Juvenile Sub-Committee

In 2018 the PPUI Honorary President appointed a PPUI sub-committee to look at all aspects of the Ladies & Juvenile game. The sub-committee was asked to discuss items in relation to participation rates, barriers to participation, handicaps, competitions, administration and much more. This sub-committee was formally appointed in September 2018 and will be in operation until AGM in 2020.

Over the past few months this sub-committee have been working in the background looking at issues facing Ladies & Juveniles in the sport of Pitch and Putt. At the PPUI's recent Convention held on March 9th in the Templemore Arms Hotel, Declan Sheedy as chair presented a summary of the sub-committee's work so far and detailed some of the recommendations made to the NEC.

The Ladies & Juvenile sub-committee members are:

Declan Sheedy, Clare Road (Chairperson)
 Mark Keohane, Rocklodge
 Christine Mulvey, Glenville
 Liam Leahy, Lakeside

Lily O'Brien, Lakeside
 Darren Keogh, Ryston
 Audrey Donnelly, MacBride

Some of the recommendations are well under-way with a motion was passed at Convention to allow the NEC make temporary changes to the PPUI Constitution and Rules of Play in order to trial some of the recommendations that may arise out of the sub-committees work.

For the sub-committee to get feedback from the general public, two email addresses have been set up, ladies@ppui.ie and juveniles@ppui.ie. There has also been a new Facebook page set up which is dedicated to increasing the profile, promotion and development of Ladies and U16 Pitch & Putt in Ireland.

The work of the sub-committee will continue over the coming weeks and months. The sub-committee is very eager to hear from PPUI members and welcomes any feedback. Comments can be directed to the PPUI – Ladies and Juvenile Facebook page or to the e-mail addresses listed above.

Siobhan Scannell—Collins P&P Club

By John Manning

Two-time National individual ladies championship runner-up Siobhan Scannell (Collins) has been one of the top players on the Pitch and Putt circuit for two decades, winning multiple Cork and Munster titles as well as the National Mixed Foursomes. John Manning profiles her in the following piece

Siobhan's first involvement at national Pitch and Putt level came in the National Club Tournament at Larkspur Park in 1997 when she joined her father Willie (RIP), Karl O'Keeffe and John Walsh in a Collins team that finished third, two behind Templebreedy.

She reached the 2009 National Ladies Matchplay final at Castletown before going down 5&4 to Tracey McGrath (Erry). She has also contested the National Matchplay semi-finals at Hillview in 2002 and at Stackallen in 2007, losing narrowly to the eventual champion on each occasion. Siobhan scored a brilliant 141 in the 2007 National Ladies Strokeplay Championship at Tullamore but had to be content with second place when the legendary Geraldine Ward (Portmarnock) posted 140. Siobhan placed fourth in the 2018 National Strokeplay championship at Collins.

After finishing runner-up to Tralee's Teresa Broderick in the 2003 Munster Ladies Strokeplay Championship at Tralee, Siobhan embarked on a run of three Munster Ladies Strokeplay titles in four years. She fired an impressive 97 at Lakewood in 2005 to head Claire O'Flynn (ESB) by three strokes. Two years later, Siobhan returned 97 in the Munster Strokeplay Championship at St. Anne's to finish two clear of Collins

colleague Linda Murphy. She retained the Munster Strokeplay crown at Lakeside in 2008 when her 110 tally was three better than Claire O'Flynn once more.

Having reached the Munster Ladies Matchplay Championship semi-finals at Clare Road in 2000 and at Ballinlough in 2004, Siobhan finally got her hands on the Provincial Matchplay trophy at Collins in 2008. After a narrow victory against ESB's Ann Daly in the Semi-Final, Siobhan was a convincing final winner over Margaret Webster (Larkspur Park). Two consecutive Munster Ladies Matchplay wins were chalked-up a year later at Castleisland when Siobhan beat Martha O'Brien (Lakeside) in the last four before a final success against club counterpart Patsy O'Donovan.

Siobhan defeated club-mate Linda Murphy by 3&2 in the 2006 Cork Ladies' Matchplay Championship Final at ESB. That was the first of Siobhan's three-in-a-row in



Siobhan Scannell—Collins P&P Club



Action from the 2019 Catalan Open held at the Portal del Roc course.

the County Matchplay. She beat Chris O'Shaughnessy (St. Annes) by 7&6 in the 2007 decider at Lakewood before overcoming Sharon Bowes (Fermoy) at Fermoy by the same margin a year later at Fermoy. Siobhan defeated Lily Carroll (Lakewood) in a play-off for the 2004 Cork Ladies Strokeplay championship at Collins. Siobhan opened 2, 1, 2 in the play-off and finished an impressive six under par for the extra nine holes.

She has been hugely successful in Mixed Foursomes with her brother Chris. Chris and Siobhan scored +9 to win the 2007 Munster Mixed Foursomes at Hillview. Having been National Mixed Foursomes runners-up in 2005 at Lucan and in 2007 at Rocklodge, Chris and Siobhan finally clinched the Sean Coyne Memorial Trophy in 2009 with +14 at Deerpark.

Siobhan joined Vera McCarthy, Claire Murphy, Linda Murphy and Joan Higgins in the Cork team that won the 2000 Munster Inter County Championship at Hillview. Successful

campaigns followed at Bruff (2002), Cunnigar (2003, 2006), Lakeside (2004), Kilmichael (2007), Tramore (2012, 2016) and Parteen (2018) giving Siobhan an impressive haul of nine provincial Inter-County victories in the Rebel red.

A National Ladies Inter-County Championship victory with Cork at St Patricks (Enniscorthy) in 2012 has been augmented by four silver medals and half a dozen third place gongs. A Collins team comprising Siobhan, Chris Scannell, Trevor Ahern and Linda Murphy scored 150 points to annex Best Gross in the 2007 National Mixed Team Event at Lakeside.

That was a year after the same quartet fired 162 points at Stackallen to finish second to Kilbeggan.

PPUI Coaching & Development Manager – A Farewell Note

In October 2015 I started in the role of National Coaching & Development Manager with the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland. Prior to that my involvement with the sport of Pitch and Putt was as a youngster playing the course on the Birr side of Roscrea with my mam who had got involved through ICA and also at the course in Lady's Island, Wexford on my summer holidays. The latter may have been a Par3, I'm not entirely certain. What I am sure of is that both are now long closed, an unfortunate running theme with Pitch and Putt courses.

Over the past three and a half years I have greatly enjoyed my time with the PPUI and the experience I have gained working with clubs will stand to me for a long time. There are passionate people within the sport of Pitch and Putt and it's what's needed greatly at this time. In the early stages of my appointment I tried to meet with as many clubs and county boards as possible to get

a feel for the state of the game and the attitude of administrators within the sport. A lot of the early conversations revolved around the decline in the game and trying to understand how to stop the slide and get the game back to where it was. There was and still is no easy solution to it, other than working with the local community to increase awareness of the club and the sport and to try and get people in the door to try it out. The most successful clubs at attracting new members haven't done anything more dramatic or ground breaking than that. Going forward the clubs who will have a strong future are the ones who will work with the likes of the Ladies & Juvenile sub-committee and run programmes to get people playing P&P.

It has been great to work with clubs and people who have thought along these lines. One of the early projects I worked on was with Meath LSP and Mary Farrell whose passion for the



Picture with FIPPA President Victor Moscatel is Dennis Monaghan (Shandon P&P Club) who was the winner of the Senior Classification at the 2019 Catalan Open

game was great to see. Working with clubs in Meath, Meath LSP, Mary and Fergal Barry many children with special needs were introduced to the sport of P&P. The template of this programme was then repeated with Monaghan LSP and Inniskeen P&P Club with Michael Vaughan providing great support. It is through programmes like these, whether the target is young people, ladies, gents, older adults, past members, local community groups, local sports clubs and so on where clubs will be able to get their members from. It does however take a bit of time and effort to succeed at programmes like these and it also helps if you have someone like Mary Farrell involved.

The PPUI Strategic plan 2017 – 2021 was something I truly enjoyed being part of from start to finish. It took a lot of work to get developed but working with John Manning, Michael Murphy, Ger Holland, Darren Keogh and Mark Keohane it was a great process and hopefully it is a plan that will help the sport over the next few years. There are some great opportunities within it and can certainly be built on for the future development of the sport.

The partnership with the Golf Course Superintendent Association of Ireland (GCSAI) is also something to look back on as a positive. Many clubs rely on volunteers to look after their courses and for the PPUI to be associated with a professional green keeping body is a great asset to have. I would encourage all clubs to get involved in the training seminars and get at least one person from the club a registered member of the GCSAI. Professional green keepers don't sit back and say it's ok, I know what I am doing I don't need to learn more. They are constantly trying to learn more about their profession and get their facilities to the best standard possible.

I was delighted to be a part of the PPUI Secondary School Championship over the past few years and feel it is competition that should get a lot more support and attention that it is. I would encourage all clubs to get their juvenile members involved. Like most secondary school competitions there isn't a requirement that players be registered with the National Governing Body of the sport. This is a great chance for clubs to get involved with schools in their community and get young people involved in the sport.

Child safeguarding has seen many developments over the past number of years, and I have been delighted to be part of the changes within the PPUI. Online Garda Vetting is now available to PPUI clubs and their members which has been a major development. With the changes in legislation in recent years there is an onus on clubs to ensure that they provide a safe and secure sport for young people. This is what we would all want for our kids. In the next 12 – 18 months every governing body will be carrying out audits of their affiliated clubs on the child welfare practices to ensure compliance. I encourage all clubs to get involved in the process and educate themselves on their responsibilities.

There have been many more positives in my time with the PPUI and also many things I would like to take a second run at but it's not to be. I would like to thank all the clubs who have worked with me over the past 3 years and to all the club officials I have met with. There are far too many people to list here but I am grateful for their support. I'd like to thank all the members of the NEC for their support in my time here and for the guidance they have offered me. I have had the opportunity to work with all of the officers who have served during my time in one way or another. Many thanks to Anne Tighe in the



St. Francis College, Rochestown will look to defend their PPUI National Secondary Schools title this year. Glenville P&P will host the Leinster, Larkspur Park P&P will host the Munster finals, both on the 10th May with McDonagh P&P Club hosting the All-Ireland final on May 17th

PPUI office who has helped me develop over the past 3 years. Michael Murphy in his roles as Honorary Secretary on the NEC and as General Secretary and fellow staff member has also been a great source of guidance. As PPUI President when I started Eamonn Birchall was a great source of support and advice right up until his passing. Liam Sherry's passion for the game and especially the PPUI National Handicap System was great to witness and be around. Helen McMorrow was an ever-present source of guidance, support and slugging during my time with the PPUI, her passing was a great loss not only to Myles, Lakeside P&P Club but to the whole PPUI. I would like to thank PPUI President Mervyn Cooney for his support over the past three years. Not long after I started Mervyn took

up his role as President and his passion and drive for the game and his desire to secure its future will be needed by the PPUI in the next few years.

If you have gotten this far, thanks for reading this and all the Backspin ezines I have been involved in. I wish everyone involved in Pitch and Putt all the best for the future and hopefully this won't be my last involvement in the game.

Paul Hayes

PPUI

National Coaching & Development Manager

Where Barry Went, Evan Surely Followed

By John Manning

Almost two decades apart, John Manning takes a closer look at the achievements of both Barry O'Neill and Evan Carry in winning the Eugene McCarthy Cup three times in-a-row.

At Navan back in 1999, Barry O'Neill (Waterford Crystal), holder of the National Juvenile Strokeplay title for the previous two years, seemed to be in an impossible position with nine holes to play. He was an impressive eight under par but looked to have no chance of matching the superb clubhouse target of 94 set by Kieran Duncombe of St. Anne's. Barry then proceeded to birdie the next seven holes in a row, saved a great par at the 17th and safely two putted the last for 93 and a one-shot win. He so took the Eugene McCarthy Cup for the Boys' Strokeplay for the

third successive year - a feat that many thought would never be equalled, let alone surpassed.

Nearly two decades on, Shane Redmond of Channonrock (two wins and a runners-up slot in three years) apart, nobody had come close to challenging Barry O'Neill's amazing deeds. Enter one Evan Carry (Castletown). Evan wasn't born when Barry completed his three-in-a-row in 1999. At Fermoy on 18th August 2018, Evan scored 100 to clinch his third National U-16 Strokeplay title. He won by a single stroke from Jack Mullins (Kilbeggan) giving Barry company on the all-time National Juvenile Strokeplay Roll of Honour.

The 1997 Boys championship had been



Evan Carry, Castletown P&P Club pictured after his victory at the 2018 u-16 Strokeplay at Erry P&P Club.

dominated by Barry who shot 92 at Royal Meath to head George McGreal (Old County) by two. At Bagenalstown in 1998, he lifted the Eugene McCarthy Cup for the second year running to become the first player ever to win two Boys' Championships. Barry shot 94 to 97 for Ger Mara (Bagenalstown). Interestingly Evan's three-in-a-row would also begin at Royal Meath back in 2016. The joint most emphatic of the six Boys' Strokeplay victories that Barry and Evan racked-up between them came in 2016 at the Clonee course when Evan's 96 gave him a five stroke cushion over Deerpark's Lorcan Martin and two years ago at Erry when Carry fired 98 to end five clear of Dominic Scully from the host club.

Barry was a member of the Waterford team that achieved runner-up spot at the 1997 Juvenile Inter-County championship in Navan, top scoring as the Déise lads finished just two behind winners Cork. Evan helped Meath to three third places at the National U-16 Inter-County championship, in 2017 at Erry, in 2015 at Tipperary Hills and at Navan in 2014, the year Evan scored 99, aged just 12, to secure Best 10-13 prize in the Boys' Strokeplay. He stands alone with his four Leinster Strokeplay championships and three Leinster Matchplay crowns, all accumulated across five counties over five fruitful seasons, from 2014 to 2018.

The Castletown man has also featured on Royal County teams that picked-up a Leinster Inter-County championship win at Collinstown in 2017 and provincial Inter-County silver medals (in 2014 and 2015). Barry didn't play much Pitch & Putt as an adult. He quickly graduated to the big domestic golf championships, such as the West and East of Ireland and Irish Close. Having become a golf professional, he campaigned on

the American mini-tours for a number of years.

In contrast Evan, who is now aged 16, has been campaigning on the adult Pitch & Putt scene during the early stages of the 2019 campaign. Intermediate grade winner at the Kildare County Board Scratch Cup in Poulaphouca, Evan filled fourth place overall at the Johnny Crean Memorial Scratch Cup in Ierne. The National U-16 Matchplay didn't exist in the Barry O'Neill era so Evan moved ahead to four national individual U-16 successes with his 2018 victory at Kilbeggan when he beat Shea Fennell (Parteen) by 8&7 in the final.

Neither were there any international opportunities for the U-16's back in the 1990s whereas Evan Carry represented Ireland against the touring Catalans last August.



**Barry O'Neill, Waterford
Crystal P&P Club**

BACKSPIN PRODUCTION TEAM

Jason O'Connor, John Manning, Mervyn Cooney and Paul Hayes

(continued from first page) an Irish perspective as well as profile Bryan Delaney our recent No 1 ranked Gents player for 2018. Also, we have a look at the achievements of Barry O'Neill and Evan Carry 20 years apart in winning the Eugene McCarthy Cup three consecutive years. John has a bit of a Cork focus as well looking at St Annes (of which Eugene McCarthy was a member) being honoured locally as well as profiles of Cork Ladies players Norma O'Brien & Siobhan Scannell.

Our President Mervyn Cooney also addresses us on the beginning of his second consecutive term as PPUI President as well as his third in total. Paul also writes about his three and a half years in the role of Development Manager.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Paul specifically for his efforts on Backspin over the last three years since we restarted the project in 2016 after an absence of any edition for one year. We worked together on 11 issues and his attention to detail with them all was marvelous

and allowed us to enhance the message of our sport to a wider audience. His was courteous and understanding of how I wanted editions to look each and every time.

I will discuss the future of the project with Paul's successor as Development Manager but I don't envisage any further edition until after the summer at this particular stage.

I finish by wishing Paul and his young family well in the future wherever the road takes them in life.

Happy Reading,

Jason O'Connor

Communications & Press Officer
PPUI

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MAJOR UPCOMING FIXTURES AND DATES TO REMEMBER

May 18th & 19th	Munster Ladies & Gents Matchplay @ Larkspur Park Leinster Ladies & Gents Matchplay @ Trim & Erry
June 1st to 3rd	National Matchplay @ Rocklodge
June 15th & 16th	Munster Ladies & Gents Strokeplay @ Listowel Leinster Gents Strokeplay @ Collinstown
June 16th	Leinster Ladies Strokeplay @ Kilbeggan