

BRONZE FOR BANDON IN INTER-CLUB PREMIER NATIONAL LEAGUE

The Ladies Team of Bandon Athletic Club recently competed in the ESB National League against some of the most elite of athletic clubs in Ireland. The object of this competition is to find the best Athletic Club in Ireland. This extremely competitive competition is run over 3 days with a total of 19 events to complete each day, the result based on the team with the highest number of points at the end of the 3 days. After being defeated into fourth place last year by a mere 1 point, Bandon ladies were determined that they were not going to come home disappointed again this year.

6 Bandonian Athletes represented the Club, namely, Rachel Roche, Linda O' Donovan, Valerie Lynch, Carmel McCarthy, Liz McCarthy Coomey and Colette Hurley Tuthill along with 4 Guests, Roisin Howard, Dawn Kelly, Christina Broderick and Marian Andrews. Our Section of the first day of the League was held in Waterford and the second day in Cork, with teams from the other Section competing in Navan and Santry, and the Final [consisting of the 8 clubs with the highest number of points at this stage of the competition], being held in Tullamore on the 11th of August. Bandon were looking good going into the final being in 1st position in their section of the proceedings with some excellent performances by every athlete involved but it was still all to run for in the final.

Weather dominated proceedings the day of the final when heavy rain seemed to be constant for much of the competition ensuring flooded sand pits and slippery throwing circles but these conditions didn't lessen the tension in any camp. Things got off to a good start with Roisin Howard leaping 1.50 in the High Jump to secure 4th place and Liz McCarthy Coomey and Dawn Kelly attaining their points in the Shot and 100m hurdles respectively. Add in Rachel Roche throwing a PB of 31.01 winning the Javelin and Colette Hurley Tuthill winning the 1500m Walk in 7.05, also close to her PB, things were on the up.

Following this Liz McCarthy Coomey was back in action in the Hammer and secured third place in a very competitive field throwing out just under 32 meters. Dawn and Christina again proved their worth managing 5th in the 400m hurdles and 6th in the Triple Jump, both events including some of the best in Ireland in these events. Back on the track Carmel McCarthy Crowley competed in the 1500m being placed 4th in a time of 4.56 followed in the next event by Christina Broderick finishing in an excellent 3rd place in the 400m in 59 seconds. After barely time to warm down not to mind warm up, next up again was Carmel McCarthy Crowley for the 3000m. Carmel took off from the gun like a scalded cat and it seemed as if the 1500m previous to this was just a warm up for her. She continued to dominate the race to the end and won in a time of 10.28.

With some of the top sprinters competing in the 100m and 200m, Roisin Howard [a high and long jumper by trade] and Christina [a 400m runner] did themselves proud to finish in 5th in the 100m and 3rd in the 200m. Lynda O' Donovan finished in 5th place in the 800m in a race which was won in a time of 2.15 and both Lynda, Roisin, Dawn and Christina made up the Relay Teams for both the 4 X 100m and the 4 X 400m where in a thrilling finish they finished 4th. The final field events were the Pole Vault where Valerie Lynch, despite slippery conditions underfoot, came second in an event in which she is improving immensely, Rachel Roche came 3rd in the Discus with a throw of 26.24 and Rosin Howard jumped 5.14 in the Long Jump gaining her 3rd place.

At the end of a very long and tiring day, it was now just a matter finding dry clothes to put on while waiting for the Officials to tot up the scores. Just before the results were announced, the silence in the gymnasium showed that tensions were rising again. Nervous smiles passed between

rivalry clubs and somewhat sincere best of lucks were whispered. Finally the results [!] Northern Ireland Club, Abbey Athletic Club, whom everyone predicted would be ahead of the posse and who also won in 2006, were 1st, Dundrum South Dublin, who also had a very strong Team came second, and, thankfully, this year, Bandon got the bronze and were just a mere point behind the Silver and 7.5 points behind the Gold.

Despite the weather, overall it was an excellent 3 days and well done to the competitors and thank you to our guests, who competed in such dreadful conditions in the final and hopefully Bandon will be back next year to move another step [or two!] up the ladder of success.