



PRESS RELEASE

23 September 2011

14 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALS FOR IRELAND WINS PLACE IRISH LIFESAVERS SIXTH IN EUROPE

Ireland has won fourteen medals in the European Lifesaving Championships in Alicante, Spain, a wonderful achievement at an International gala that ended today (15-23 Sept 2011).

The efforts of Ireland's fittest Lifeguards ensured a place in the top ten internationally, coming sixth overall in the premier Lifesaving event in Europe that saw the best lifesavers from twenty countries pitted against each other in a number of race-style lifesaving events in both the pool and in the sea.

The Championships simulate real life rescue situations that these Lifesavers can expect to encounter as Lifeguards. To secure fourteen International medals at European level is testimony to how hard they trained and how well they prepared as individuals and as a team.

Lifesaving sport is primarily intended to encourage lifesavers to develop, maintain and improve the essential physical and mental skills needed to save lives in the aquatic environment. Lifesaving competitions consist of a variety of competitions to further develop and demonstrate lifesaving skills, fitness and motivation. Children around Ireland as young as eight can get involved in a series of progressive Lifesaving classes taught by Irish Water Safety, through the www.iws.ie website.

Undaunted by the searing Spanish temperatures, Ireland's best ever performance is evident from the tally of medals - Six Gold Medals, Five Silver, Three Bronze. The Irish team got off to a great start, winning the first event in the pool, the SERC (Simulated Emergency Response Competition). This is a simulated rescue situation in which four members of the team have to work together to rescue all the subjects involved. Ireland's proficiency across a range of disciplines is reflected in the range of medal wins - Gold in SERC and in Line Throw. Silver in Taplin and in Board Race; Bronze in Board Rescue and in Oceanman.

Name	Pool 4 x 25m Manikin Relay	Pool 4 x 50 Medley relay	Pool Serc	Pool Line Throw	Ocean Surf Race	Ocean Board Race	Ocean Ski Race	Ocean Man	Ocean Board Rescue	Ocean Tube Rescue	Ocean Taplin	Flags
Colm Fitzgerald (Clare)	A final Irish Rec		1st							8th	2nd	11th
Bernard Cahill (Clare)	A final Irish Rec				9th	7th		3rd		8th	2nd	
Dylan Barrett (Clare)				1st	12th				3rd			
Joe Murphy (Waterford)	A final Irish Rec				17th					8th		
John Morton (Wicklow)	A final Irish Rec		1st				6th			8th	2nd	
Oisin McGrath (Clare)			1st	1st		2nd	13th	7th	3rd		2nd	
Grace Doyle (Waterford)	B final				21st				B final 1st	B final 1st	7th	
Triona McMenamin (Donegal)	B final	B final	1st	B final	30th				B final 1st		7th	
Sara English (Mayo)	B final	B final			20th					B final 1st	7th	
Siobhan McGrath (Clare)	B final	B final		B final						B final 1st	7th	
Aimee Walsh (Galway)		B final								B final 1st		

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The sport of Lifesaving:

1. Life Saving Sport is recognised as an Olympic Category two Sport and it is recognised by the International Olympic Committee and the World Sports Federation.
2. The sport is controlled by International Lifesaving (ILS) Sport and this organisation is recognised by IOC as the controlling body for the sport worldwide. There are over one hundred countries registered as members of ILS.
3. Within Europe the sport is controlled by International Lifesaving Sport Europe a subsidiary body of ILS.
4. Irish Water Safety is recognised by both bodies as the National Governing Body for the sport in Ireland.
5. Irish Water Safety has organised the sport in Ireland since 1946. His Excellency President Sean T. O'Ceallaigh presented the Presidents Award to IWS in 1950 for competition between the counties of Ireland and it is competed for every year since then.
6. ILS, ILSE and IWS all subscribe to WADA.
7. The sport holds European and World Championships in addition to National Championships,
8. A Sports Commission controls the sport within IWS. Participation in competitions has been part funded by IWS.
9. Life Saving Sport is quite distinct in that the disciplines in which people compete are directly related to elements of lifeguarding,

Event descriptions:

Manikin Relay: Four competitors in turn carry a manikin approximately 25m each.

Medley Relay: With a dive start on an acoustic signal, the first competitor swims 50m freestyle without fins. With a dive start after the first competitor touches the wall, the second competitor swims 50m Freestyle with fins. With a dive start after the second competitor touches the wall, the third competitor swims 50m freestyle towing a rescue tube. The third competitor touches the turning edge. The fourth competitor is in the water wearing fins with at least one hand on the turning edge or starting block. The fourth competitor takes the harness of the rescue tube and the third competitor to a fourth competitor in the water wearing fins with at least one hand on the turning edge or starting block. The third competitor, playing the role of "victim," holds the rescue tube with both hands, while being towed 50m by the fourth competitor to the finish.

Line Throw: In this timed event, the competitor throws an unweighted line to a fellow team member located in the water located 12m distant and pulls this "victim" back to the finish edge of the pool.

Surf Race: With a running start into the surf from the start line on the beach, competitors swim around the 400m course designated by buoys, returning to shore to finish between the finish flags on the beach.

Board Race: Competitors stand on or behind the start line on the beach with their boards 1.5m apart. At the start signal, competitors enter the water, launch their boards, and paddle the course marked by buoys, return to the beach, and run to cross the finish line.

Ski Race: On the starting signal, competitors paddle their skis around the course marked by buoys and return to finish when any part of the ski crosses the in-water finish line – ridden, gripped, or carried by the competitor.

Oceanman: Competitors cover a 1200m course that includes a swim leg, a board leg, a ski leg, and a beach sprint finish.

Board Rescue: In this event, 1 member of the team swims approximately 120m to a designated buoy, signals, and waits to be picked up by the second member of the team on a board. They both paddle to shore and cross the finish line on the beach with the board.

Tube Rescue: Four competitors from each team participate in this event: a "victim," one rescue tube swimmer, and two rescuers. The victim swims approximately 120 m to a designated buoy, signals, and waits to be rescued by the rescue tube swimmer. As they return to shore, the remaining two rescuers enter the water to assist. The event finishes when the first competitor in a team crosses the finish line while in contact with the victim.

Taplin: Teams of 4 competitors (1 swimmer, 1 board paddler, 1 surf ski paddler, and 1 runner) cover the course in a sequence of legs determined by draw at the start of each competition.

Flags: From a prone starting position on the beach, competitors rise, turn and race to obtain a baton (beach flag) buried upright in the sand approximately 20m away. Since there are always fewer batons than competitors, those who fail to obtain a baton are eliminated.