

PRESS RELEASE

09/09/14

CLARE DOMINATE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS Best Lifesavers in Ireland challenge each other Sat 6th Sept 2014, Brittas Bay Beach, Co Wicklow

Clare has won The President's Trophy, presented to Ireland's top Lifeguards who competed at Irish Water Safety's National Beach Rescue Championships at Brittas Bay beach, Wicklow on Saturday 6th Sept.



Competitors gathered from counties nationwide, including competitors from Ireland's International Lifesaving Team who will compete in the World Lifesaving Championships in France on September 16th.

Competitors at the National Championships had their skills tested in events that simulate emergency rescue scenarios.

The Clare team saw off strong competition from the fittest Lifeguards nationwide in this gala of lifesaving - the most significant and breathtaking life saving competition in Ireland. Ireland's best Lifesavers contended with the open water conditions at Brittas Bay coast to rescue potential "casualties" in testing swim races, rescue board races and other events (see below), which culminate in exciting finals throughout the day.

On average, 135 people drown in Ireland every year yet this figure would be far higher but for the actions of trained Lifesavers. Last summer for example, Lifeguards rescued nearly 900 people from drowning and reunited almost 1,000 children found wandering near water.

Commenting on the additional challenges of open water competitions, the Chairman of Irish Water Safety's Sports Commission, Seamus O'Neill noted the team's readiness for the challenge. "Athletes not only competed with each other while using their life saving equipment but also with the open water conditions of Brittas Bay Beach. The Sport of Lifesaving has been developed to improve the standard of life guarding in Ireland and assist lifesavers save lives."

As part of its remit to promote water safety in Ireland, Irish Water Safety trains Lifeguards employed at beaches, lakes, rivers and pools nationwide. Irish Water Safety encourages the public to learn to swim and enroll in one of the many courses nationwide in the valuable skills of water survival and lifesaving.

RESULTS:

President's Trophy: Clare

Lifesavers - Men: 1st: Clare; 2nd Wicklow; 3rd Waterford

Lifesavers – Ladies: 1st Donegal; 2nd Clare; 3rd Waterford

Masters – combined: 1st Cork; 2nd Clare; 3rd Donegal

Full results by county: <http://www.iws.ie/competition/results.265.html>

Further info about Clare team from: Clare McGrath: 087-626.315 / mcgrathclare@gmail.com

Ends.

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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 manages the sport within IWS. Participation in competitions has been part funded by Irish Sports Council and IWS funding.
9. Life Saving Sport is quite distinct in that the disciplines in which people compete are directly related to elements of lifeguarding,

Event Descriptions:

SURF RACE

EVENT DESCRIPTION

With a running start into the surf from the start line on the beach, competitors swim around the 400 m (280 m for Masters) course designated by buoys, returning to shore to finish between the finish flags on the beach.

RESCUE TUBE RESCUE

EVENT DESCRIPTION

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.

BEACH FLAGS

EVENT DESCRIPTION

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 20 m away. Since there are always fewer batons than competitors, those who fail to obtain a baton are eliminated.

BEACH SPRINT

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Competitors take their positions in their allotted lanes. At the starting signal, competitors race the 90 m course to the finish line. The finish is judged on the competitor's chest crossing the finish line. Competitors must finish the event on their feet in an upright position.

BEACH RELAY

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Teams of four individuals (three in Masters) compete in baton relay fashion over a 90 m course. To start, two (one and two members in Masters) competitors take positions in their allotted lane at each end of the course.

After the start each competitor completes a leg of the course with a baton held in either hand and passes the baton at the conclusion of the first, second, and third legs to the next runner. All competitors shall finish their leg of the event on their feet and in an upright position. Competitors are not permitted to interfere with the progress of other competitors.

SURF SKI RACE

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Competitors steady their skis in line in knee-deep water about 1.5 m apart.

Competitors must obey directions from the starter or check starter concerning ski alignment at the start. 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. Competitors may lose contact and control of their ski without necessarily being disqualified. To complete the race competitors must have (or have regained) their ski and paddle and cross the finish line from the seaward side while maintaining contact with the ski and paddle. Competitors are not permitted to hold or otherwise interfere with other competitors' skis or deliberately impede their progress.

BOARD RACE

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Competitors stand on or behind the start line on the beach with their boards 1.5 m 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. Competitors are not permitted to hold or otherwise interfere with other competitors' boards or deliberately impede their progress.

BOARD RESCUE

EVENT DESCRIPTION

In this event, one member of the team swims approximately 120 m 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. Competitors must start from the correct allotted position. Competitors swimming to and signalling from the wrong buoy shall be disqualified.

OCEANMAN / OCEANWOMAN

(formerly Ironman / Ironwoman)

Event description

Competitors cover a 1400 m (approx.) course that includes a swim leg, a board leg, a ski leg, and a beach sprint finish. Conditions of racing of each leg are as generally required for the individual conditions of that discipline including the rules governing the component disciplines: surf ski races, board races, surf races, beach sprints.

The sequence of legs shall be determined by draw at the commencement of each competition. The same ballot shall determine the order of legs for the Oceanman / Oceanwoman Relay (formerly Taplin Relay). If the surf ski leg is first, competitors will start with a typical in-water start.