

## Hession Smashes His Own Record

Contributed by Michael Tobin  
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The rise of Athenry AC's Paul Hession to the status of superstar received a further boost on Sunday as the medical student smashed his own national senior record over 60 metres when winning the national title against top class opposition at the Odyssey Arena, Belfast. Already confirmed as the the fastest Irishman ever when making the record his own by clocking 6.66 seconds in Vienna less than a month ago, Paul clocked 6.63 seconds on Sunday to place himself firmly amongst the fastest in Europe.

His recent run of good form couldn't be timed any better as the European Indoor Championships is just two weeks away and will be held in Birmingham on 3rd and 4th March. Paul was very impressive in qualifying, comfortably winning his heat in 6.69 and the semi-final in 6.72. It was at these championships last year that the public first sat up and noticed one Derval O'Rourke when she smashed the Irish record before going on to win the World Indoor Championship and Paul is beginning to recieve similar attention from the national media. He can look forward in confidence to representing Ireland against Europe's finest in two weeks time.

It was a great day for Galway sprinting as Gemma Hynes of Galway City Harriers made a big breakthrough by winning her first national senior title with a convincing performance in the 200m. She clocked 25.36 over the distance to hold off the visting Norwegian pair of Trine Sjaastad and Heidi Bergsand. Gemma, a student at DCU, was the fastest qualifier to the final and had the privilege of the coveted outside lane which lessened the effect of the tight indoor bends. Gemma also ran well in the 60m, narrowly missing qualification for a star studded final, with a 7.98 clocking.

Also in Belfast, William Finnegan of Craughwell AC finished 5th in the triple jump with a leap of 12.68m, short of his usual best. Athenry's Claire McNamara had an unfortunate start to her high jump competition. Having cleared her opening height, she slipped getting off the landing mat and had to withdraw from the competition having fractured her arm. Daniel Gillen of Athenry performed well in the 60m finishing 2nd in his heat but missing out on the next round.