

## McNamara clinches place on Irish cross country team

Contributed by Michael Tobin  
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Galway athletes competed with the best runners in Ireland on a bright but cold day in Dungarvan on Sunday in the first day of the National Cross-Country Finals. Galway was well represented by teams and individuals from across the county. As with any sporting or other event, the standard of competition at National level is extraordinary high and these cross-country finals proved no different.

Galway Senior Men put in a strong performance with Paul McNamara (Athenry AC) in 5th place, Jerry Ryan (Galway City Harriers) in 8th place, Gary Thornton (Galway City Harriers) in 19th, Michael O'Connor (Galway City Harriers) in 31st, Ian Egan (Galway City Harriers) in 56th, Martin Corcoran (Loughrea AC) in 85th with Tommy Joe Whyte (Tuam AC) and Pat Sherry (Galway City Harriers) completing the team. Paul McNamara's finishing position of 5th qualifies him for the Irish team to compete in the European Cross Country Championships on December 12th. In the Senior Women 5000m, Kathryn Casserly of Castlegar AC race a fine race to finish in 21st position overall, with Finnola Keane taking 41st position. For Galway and Connacht juvenile age groups, the U11 girls 800m was the highlight of the day – with Connacht clubs taking a clean sweep of the top 3 places in the club competition. Galway City Harriers put in a superb performance to take 2nd place in the club event, with Ruth O'Sullivan (15), Nicola Conlon (50), Georgina Healy (52), Natalie Hehir (57), Deirdre Lally and Emma Johnson. Swinford AC took 1st place with a score of 99 pts and Ballinamore AC took 3rd place with a score of 176. Linda Porter from Craughwell AC ran the race of her young career to finish in 4th place overall and lead both Galway and Connacht to 2nd place in both the inter-county and provincial competitions. The Galway team performance was cemented with fine performances from the afore-mentioned Galway City Harriers runners and from Athenry AC runners Letitia Collins (11), Eadaoin Bannon (23) and Marie Touhy (33). In the U11 boys 800m, David Concannon from Craughwell AC finished in 13th place, leading his team to 6th place in the club competition amidst stiff competition, particularly from Donegal clubs where Finn Valley AC and Letterkenny AC took 1st and 2nd place. Conor Caulfield from Athenry AC ran a strong race in the U13 boys 1200m to finish in 8th position and the first Connacht athlete home. Club-mate Thomas Flynn finished in 21st position, with Athenry AC taking 7th place in the club competition and Galway City Harriers in 12th place. The U13 girl's 1000m was a tough race, with a very difficult and congested start to the race. Rachel Shaw from Athenry AC continued her dominance of this age group in Connacht, finishing in 5th place overall and the top U13 athlete from the west. Rachel Finnegan from Craughwell AC was the next Connacht athlete across the line in 14th place. A strong performance from the remainder of the team saw Connacht take 3rd place in the provincial event, with Niamh Walsh from Galway City Harriers as the 6th scorer for Connacht in 52nd place. Galway City Harriers finished in 9th place in the club event with Craughwell AC in 10th place. Irene Gorman was the strongest of the Galway athletes in the girls U15 1500m, finishing in 21st position and leading Galway City Harriers to 5th position in the club competition. Most of the Galway athletes who competed at the weekend will be in action again on Sunday 12th December when the National Cross-Country Finals for the even age groups (u12, u14, u16, u18) take place in Mullingar.