

## Rowing Head of the Shannon

## Record numbers compete in Head of the Shannon

On December 1 Carrick Rowing Club hosted the Head of Shannon which is a 3.8km time-trial, where rowers race against the clock where the fastest crew or rower completing the course in the shortest time in their age and boat category is deemed winner.

Although it was an early start for most of the clubs, whose travels to Carrick-on-Shannon commenced at 4am, crews turned up in record numbers.

First out on this cold but calm winter morning representing Carrick RC were the womens j15 8 with Aoife Lowe (stroke), Kate Lowe, Patricia Kaminska, Emma O'Connell, Grace Creighton, Alisha Gilhooly, Elsie Harman, Nessa Flynn (bow) and Eolann Nugent (cox) who just missed out on the fastest time in their category by three seconds.

That was followed by the womens j18 quad with Nour Stevens (stroke), Ava Brogan,

Orlaith Guckian and Ailbhe O'Rourke.

The female scullers were Gemma Guckian and Shauna Murtagh in the senior sculls and Gwen O'Rourke in the j15 single scull.

In the boys section, Carrick RC were represented by Fintan Early in the mens club scull, Ciaran Ryan in the j16 scull and in the j15 mens quad were Oisín Reynolds, Oisín Cullen, Torin O'Donnaile and Leon O'Brien.

The fastest overall crew in the first head was the mens Commercial Club 8X+ with a time of 14:12 and the fastest junior crew was the mens Colaiste Iognaid j18 4+ with a time of 14:25.

Lunch was held from 12.30pm-1.40pm with all kinds of foods being served from porridge and crepes to our award winning local chef Sham's famous chicken curry which sold out in minutes. This was followed by a beautiful array of sweet treats home baked by all the mothers of the club.



Some of the crews who competed in the recent Head of the Shannon, hosted by Carrick Rowing Club are pictured from above by Mark Kelly.

As with Carrick RC's last event the 'go green scheme' was a success with everybody adhering to the three bins.

With weather conditions improving after lunch, it was back to work.

The second Carrick RC group to go out at 2pm were

the womens club 8+ with Shauna Murtagh (stroke), Gemma Guckian, Orlaith Guckian, Emma O'Connell, Ailbhe O'Rourke, Alisha Gilhooly, Abi King, Grace Early (bow) and Katie McGovern (cox), for the womens j15 4X+ (A) with Aoife

Lowe, Gwen O'Rourke, Patricia Kaminska and Kate Lowe with Hannah Butler (cox) and the B quad was Nessa Flynn, Grace Creighton, Grace Coles, Elsie Harman and Eolann Nugent (cox).

The womens j14 4X+ were

Mae Harman, Sarah Lee, Aisling Ryan, Constance Boyd and cox Katie McGovern. In the j16 womens scull was Nour Stevens.

In the mens j18 sculls were Ciaran Ryan and Fintan Early who got the best time in this category. The last crew to represent Carrick RC for the day were the mens j14 4X+ which were Jonjo Devine, Sean McGovern, Evan Murray, Marin Antonov and cox Eli Lowe.

The fastest crew over all of this head were the Mens Colaiste Iognaid j18A 8+ with a time of 12:56.

Overall the day was very successful. Large events like this are impossible to run without the safety back up of Leitrim Sub-Aqua Club and Civil Defence.

Carrick Rowing club have expressed their thanks to everyone that helped out in the smooth running of our home town event.

Their voluntary work and commitment never goes unnoticed.

## This Sporting Life

If you or someone you know is interested in getting involved, I would urge you to give it a go



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## The Connacht Wheelchair hurling team needs you!

A few weeks back I was fortunate enough to attend the M. Donnelly All Ireland Wheelchair Hurling finals at the National Sports Campus in Abbotstown.

Wheelchair hurling was devised by Tim Maher 20 years ago and has become an established part of the Gaelic Games annual calendar. The teams compete at inter-provincial level during four National League blitz days, one hosted by each of the four provinces. (Ballinamore created a little bit of history in 2017 when it became the first venue in Leitrim to host one of the blitzes.) The All-Ireland Championship day - also a blitz-style tournament - is the finale of the year and is usually held in Dublin.

The All Ireland final games were filled with skill, athleticism, dramatic finishes, healthy competition, and sportsmanship. The only thing missing was a Leitrim representative on the Connacht team. I'm hoping that

this article might go some way towards recruiting an interested player or two.

The Connacht Wheelchair Hurling Group first assembled about five years ago when a few players from Munster came up to give a demonstration. It generated sufficient interest to form a Connacht panel of eight players that have been together pretty much since bar a couple of additions and departures. A team has six players, so, as coach Adrian Hession explains, the current numbers don't leave much room to manoeuvre.

"Our panel has always been around the eight number so another few recruits would ease the worry of making sure we have a full contingent for every blitz," explains Adrian, a full-time Games Promotion Officer with Connacht GAA.

"In total we have five blitzes per year. We usually train for the two Saturdays before each blitz totalling 10 training days each year. Trainings last for about 90

minutes and involves a lot of striking and we always have a game at training.

"Between training and game days we meet 15 times per year. Training usually happens in Barnacarrool near Claremorris (central to Connacht), and if that venue isn't available we train in Charlestown - on the Mayo/Sligo border," Adrian explains.

Equipment and gear is provided by Connacht GAA who are very supportive of the team. Connacht GAA also have a batch of sports chairs which the players use if needed. The players look after their own chair and usually drive themselves to events, while the younger players usually come with parents.

Everything possible is done to ensure that the athletes are well looked after. A hot meal is provided after each blitz day by the host province. Financial support is provided for all blitzes held outside of Connacht in the form of mileage and meal allowance, administered by the

Connacht GAA administrative staff.

Adrian is part of a three-man coaching team along with Thai Morley and Tim Hynes. All coaches involved have Coaching Certs, Garda Vetting and Safeguarding courses completed.

Even though I intended on

being a complete neutral at the finals, the savage in me couldn't but help pitching for Connacht. The panel consists of players from Sligo (3), Mayo (3), Roscommon (1) and Galway (1). Adrian and his coaching team would be delighted to find someone from Leitrim to give it a go.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting involved, I would urge you to give it a go. You don't need to have any prior experience or to have participated in any prior sporting code. It's great exercise and fun and the bond built up amongst the squad and coaches was tangible in the National Sports Campus.

"I don't see this as a disability sport..." enthuses Adrian, "it's just another hurling team that I'm involved in. With the added beauty that you never get wet!"

Wheelchair hurling is an indoor game and it is also mixed gender. Roscommon's Sarah Cregg is a vital player for Connacht - she also happens to be Cathal Cregg's sister so there is clearly sport in the family.

If you want to find out more contact Adrian on 087-2450566 or feel free to contact me through the Leitrim Observer offices. This time next year you could be an All-Ireland winner.

Liatroim abú.



Action from the M. Donnelly GAA Wheelchair Hurling Inter-Provincial Tournament when it was held in Boyle Sports Complex.