

# IUAA Cross Country Championships

9<sup>th</sup> March 2012

University of Ulster

Held in conjunction with the Irish Schools' Cross Country Championships, this year's event was staged at the University of Ulster's Jordanstown campus. There were in excess of 1000 competitors in all (of which approximately 150 were attached to the universities' event), not to mention spectators.

The races took place on the grass pitches on-campus with the indoor 3G pitch directly adjacent used as a warm-up area and registration area (which, unlike last year, was absolutely essential given the adverse weather which presented itself on the days leading to and on the day itself). Changing facilities and toilets were located in the same building – both of which were adequate in terms of provision. Officials from both the schools' and universities' associations were backed up by volunteers from the University of Ulster Athletics Club, as were those who set up and dismantled the course the day before, and before and after the programme of events on the day itself. A St. John's Ambulance crew were on-site to deal with any potential mishaps, of which, fortunately, there were none.

Unlike previous years (in which both the men's and women's races featured at the end of the day's programme), the women enjoyed the support of quite a number of spectators by virtue of their race being held in the midst of the schools' programme of events – the men, however, were not so lucky. Their race was, as usual, the last of the day. As mentioned, the weather was miserable – the rain was plentiful and the cold biting – this, however, did not take away from the competition with much excitement accruing to both races.

The women's race was won well by Trinity College, UCC and UCD taking second and third place respectively. 58 women finished the race, as did six full teams, indicating that perhaps, after much concern surrounding the future of the women's event at third level, interest is at long last on the up – we will have to wait and see. Twelve colleges had representation.

The men's race was an exciting one throughout with UCD, DCU, and UCC taking the top three spots in the same order. Nine complete teams crossed the

line, with sixteen colleges represented to some degree. 114 bodies crossed the line, suitably muddy and wet for an Irish cross country race.

That evening, almost all of those who competed on the day made an appearance at the banquet and prize giving ceremony, which this year was held in Belfast's Wellington Park Hotel. It certainly was a case of "the more, the merrier", as everyone, as I understand it, had a wonderful night (particularly the female prize winners, who were lucky enough to each receive a kiss on the cheek from UUAC captain).

Many thanks to all those involved in every aspect integral to the IUAA Cross Country Championships success this year, particularly Graeme Moffett and Wilbert Hollinger of the ISAA, Stephen Lipson and Cyril Smyth of the IUAA, and all those members of UUAC who contributed to the running (excuse the pun) and organisation of the event. There was a lot of work involved in order to pull it all together as seamlessly as was the case (I hope), but it was a pleasure to be involved and a nice way to see out my last year in charge of the Club.

Best wishes,

Stephen Rooney

Captain, UUAC