

## McGrady Financial Services Junior XC Series 2022

### Race 2 Report – Delamont

The wind blew fast and the rain came from the side...it was definitely the weather for a Winter Cross Country event. On Sunday the Juniors took to the undulating greens of Delamont Country Park for Race 2 of 3, of the McGrady's Financial Junior Cross Country series.

Notoriously the toughest of all the McGradys venues, the route had the welcomed addition of some wet weather in the previous few days and as more and more feet hit the ground, the dirtier and messier it got. Throw in some hail showers, whistling wind and colder temperatures, even with a change in direction to better accommodate the unsteady ground underfoot, the course threw many challenges at all runners, some as young as 5 taking to the line on the day.

The P4 boys race brought the dynamic duo of Harry McVeigh and Rossa Mc Aleenan together again to take a very convincing 1st and 2nd place finish with club mates Harry Flynn and one of the clubs young pups of the day, Ruaidhrí Watson, putting in powerful finishes.



*Harry McVeigh cruises to a second victory in the series*

Up next the P4 and Under Girls, Elizabeth Houston took 2<sup>nd</sup> place with Teigian O’Gorman and Sophie Kerr running well. Maebh Flynn and Cliona Mc Aleenan as our other two young pups showed amazing determination and smiles as they followed in behind the bigger girls shortly after.

The P5 Boys race had Luke McDonald smile to the bitter end to take 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The P5 Girls race had the raw talent of Emily Kerr on display as she cruised to take 1<sup>st</sup> place. Isla McMullan was not far behind her in a hotly fought mid race battle.

In the P6 Boys race, Connaire Og McVeigh had a solid race to take 2<sup>nd</sup> place followed by Joseph Uhomoibhi who left everything on that final straight as he tussled for his place. Thomas O’Gorman followed in behind showing great strength in worsening underfoot conditions. The P6 Girls race was the largest of the day. The Junior squad produced a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish with Saorlaith McAleenan and Alana Flynn elegantly earning those spots respectively, Mary Houston showed pose and technical skill on the back hill section of the course to come 5th. Aoife Grant and Caoimhe McAlinden took it home for the P6 girls proving that the shorter and controlled strides would pay off in the muck.



*Joseph Uhomoibhi fighting for his place against Dromore ACs Ruairí Coffey*

The P7 boys also produced a NACJ 1-2 with Fiachna McAleenan asserting his dominance in the race after an early battle with Darragh Kerr. Rónán Grant held his own to wrap up the P7 boys. Estelle Austin was the only representative in the P7 Girls, putting in a stellar second lap to make up ground and cross the line in 5.09.



*The P7 boys Darragh Kerr and Fiachna McAleenan battle it out for 1st place.*

The Year 8 boys race saw club mates Aaron O'Boyle and Henry Houston fight the bit out for 1<sup>st</sup> place in the closest finish of the day. Despite his best efforts Aaron pipped Henry to the post for yet another Top 2 finishes for the club. Jamie O'Flaherty and Ronan Hodge dug deep on failing ground to cross the line in full flight. Erin Easton showed her flawless form during the Year 8 Girls race, leading from the start to dictate the race and taking a well-deserved and impressive 1<sup>st</sup> place with Ciara Flynn running strong to come in 5<sup>th</sup>.



*Erin Easton dictates the race from start to finish*



*Aaron O'Boyle takes 1st place after a hotly contested Year 8 boys race against Henry Houston*

The Year 9 races continued to show class and agility on what was now a very challenging cut up track. Daire O'Gorman, Clara McAvoy and Emily McMullan running well on the day.



*Daire O'Gorman proving that XC is fun*

The Year 10 race challenged the balance of the young athletes on the multi lap course, as the sun began to eventually show its face. Euan McIntosh won the battle for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the boys race with an excellent finish closely followed by Karim Jardine in 5<sup>th</sup> place. The Year 10 girls didn't disappoint either with Rachel Hodge and Megan O'Boyle taking it home for the girls in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> place.



*Euan McIntosh puts on a display of strength and determination to take 2nd place in Yr10 Boys race.*

The Year 11+ race produced a fantastic finale, with the NACJ accounting for over 50% of the field in both categories, they toed the line knowing their opponents well and left all friendships on the line. Ethan McMullan earned 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the boys race with the quick succession of Yasin Brannigan, Oliver Corrigan, Rory Corrigan and Patrick McDaid one after the other across the line. Sophie Neill pushed the eventual winner, Amy McCartan, all the way to take a brilliant 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the girls race with Ellen Watson and Aoibheann O'Gorman finishing proceedings for the day with a convincing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place.

A huge thank you to McGrady Financial Services for sponsoring what was an amazing day in Delamont. Also a special mention to hosts East Down AC for hosting the event, the warm welcome everyone received was much appreciated on a cold and wet day. Race 3 will take the young athletes to Tollymore on March 6<sup>th</sup> for the final race of the series. The supporters of the young athletes are hoping that the Tollymore race will not produce as much washing as this one, though wellie boots, hot water bottles and winter woollies will be on hand!

**Race Report by Siobhan Grant**