

# STATESIDE

BY BRO. JOHN DOOLEY

**Irish athletes continued to make a big impression on the American inter-collegiate scene in 1991. Brother John Dooley charts the course of the various top performances in a year when Irish women made a significant breakthrough in U.S. athletics.**

The '90/'91 college athletics year was dominated by Sonia O'Sullivan (Ballymore-Cobh/Villanova) who became the first Irish athlete to win three NCAA titles (cross-country, 5K indoor, 3K outdoor) and the first Irish college athlete to set a world record when she ran 15:27:28 for 5K in Boston on January 26th. Sonia is now the most successful Irish athlete ever in NCAA championships. To run without a break from September '89 through European Championships '90, up to August '91 at the highest level and still win the World Student Games 1500m was sensational. Yet she was criticised for not competing in the World Championships in Tokyo! Sonia made the right decision - she recharged her batteries from mid-August to mid-September and has now embarked on her preparations for the Barcelona Olympic Games.

Sonia led Villanova to an undefeated cross country season, culminating in a decisive team victory in the NCAA in Tennessee in November 1990. Four Irish girls were in the top twenty: (1) S. O'Sullivan; (10) Sinead Delahunty (Kilkenny/Prov); (13) Geraldine Hendricken (SLOT/Prov); (19) Anita Philpott (N.Cork/Prov). Providence finished second team for their highest ever NCAA placing and Geraldine Nolan (Kilkenny) was a scoring member. Third place

Clemson had Edwina Foley (Limerick) as a scoring member.

With the exception of South African-born Sean Dollman (Leevale/W. Kentucky) who finished 8th, Irish men disappointed during the cross country season. Only Frank Hanley (Limerick/Ark) 27th and Niall Bruton (Clonliffe/Ark) 44th produced noteworthy runs. Packie Mulvany (Ashbourne/Iona) 120th and Eddie Melia (Dunleer/Kentucky) 160th were other Irish NCAA finishers.

Niall Bruton and Declan O'Callaghan (Leevale/Iona) showed rare talent and solid hope for the future with a 1,2 in the T.A.C. National Junior C.C. Championship in November. Martin Ryan (Ferbane/NYAC) was 21st in the senior race.

Natalie Davey (Mayo/Providence) was an impressive 6th in the Junior women and in the Senior women's race Valerie McGovern (Donore/Kentucky) was 6th, Geraldine Hendricken 19th and Marion Irwin (Athy/St. John's) 68th.

## Best Senior Performances

Marcus O'Sullivan (Leevale/NBTC) Mile (3:55.17) Gerry O'Reilly (Metro/NYAC) 3K (7:51.62) Frank O'Mara (Limerick/Mazda) 3K (7:50.00) Paul Quirke (Crusaders/Iron Ball AC) Shot (59' 3 1/2")

## N.C.A.A. Performances

**Women:** 5K (1) S. O'Sullivan 15:49.46; (2) V. McGovern (Donore/Kentucky) 15:53.06 3K; (8) S. Delahunty 9:20.27; (DNF) G. Hendricken (9:22.46 in heat) Mile; (6) S. O'Sullivan 4:38.80; (9) N. Davey 4:42.44 (heats); (7) G. Nolan 4:54.29; (6) A. Philpott 4:46.15.

**Men:** Arkansas won their 8th straight team title. Niall Bruton ran the second leg (1:49.4) on their 2nd placing 4x800m team (7:20.16!). Aidan O'Regan ran the opening leg (1:51.9) on the Villanova 3rd placing team (7:20.4). Winners were All-American Georgetown (7:19.86) A.R. Declan Kennedy 7th 800m ht. (1:49.90). Packie Mulvany 9th Mile ht. (4:15.08).

## INDOORS

The indoor headlines were dominated by Sonia O'Sullivan. She opened her season with a 4:34:49 mile in the Florida Classic in Gainesville on January 12. This was followed by another mile win in the New England Invitational with a Meet record time of 4:33:49. Second was Geraldine Hendricken with a PB of 4:35:49.

Sonia set her world record for the 5K when she ran 15.27.28 to win the Terrier Classic in Boston on January 26th. In February she contributed greatly to Villanova's team victory in the Big East (February 16-17) with wins in the Mile (4:42.75) and 3K (9:14.57) and anchored the winning 4 x 800m team.

# CONFERENCES

## CROSS COUNTRY

**Sun Belt:** Wins for Sean Dollman and Breda Dennehy (Bandon/Kentucky)

**Southern:** 1. Seamus Power (Treaty/ETSU) 3. Dennis Barry (Treaty/ETSU).

**New England:** 1. Geraldine Hendricken

**Atlantic Coast:** 17. Cormac Finnerty (Mullingar/Clemson)

**Southland:** 3. Stephen Murphy (Lk/North Texas) 4. James McGee (Leevale/North Texas) 5. Tom McGrath (Mullingar/McNeese)

**Mets:** 1. Iona (Eddie Bourke 3, Mel Hilliard 4, Packie Mulvany 6) 7. Declan Kennedy (DCH/St. John's) 23. Michael Furlong (Tramore/St. John's) 1. Marion Irwin (Athy/St. John's) 32. Margaret Murphy (Waterford/St. John's)

Others to figure on results sheets were Eddie O'Carroll (Leevale/W.Kentucky), Pat Davern (Treaty/ETSU), Gordon Harold (DCH/Iona State), David Wilson (Donegal/Illinois State) and Stephen Gibbons (Leevale/W.Kentucky).

## INDOORS

Declan Kennedy (DCH/St. John's) at last re-discovered his junior form of 1987 with impressive wins in the Big East (1:50.85) and Mets (1:52.58). At Notre Dame he ran a PB of 1:49.25 to qualify for the NCAAs in Indianapolis. Brian Pepsard (Raheny/Notre Dame) was part of the winning DMR team in the Central Collegiate Conference. Another 800m man to score was Aidan O'Regan (Leevale) on the winning Villanova 4x800m team in the Big East. Aidan also won the

1000m in 2:25.47. Colm Moran (Nenagh/Brown) won the Heps. Pentathlon (3698 pts) and was 5th in the IC4As. Paddy McGrath (Raheny/Manhattan) threw 56'-10" with the 35lb. weight.

## OUTDOORS

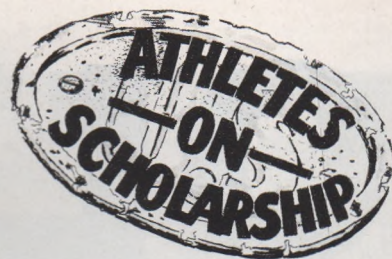
**Heps:** 1st D.T. Nicky Sweeney (DSD/Harvard) 189'-8". 1st 100H/400H Susan Smith (Brown) 14.19/60.31, also ran on winning 4x100m and 4x400m teams!!!

**Big East:** 1st 4x800m Seton Hall in 7:23.90. Gordon Dickenson (St. Benedicts) on lead-off leg. 1st 3K and 5K S. O'Sullivan 9:18.20/16:13.22.

**IC4As:** 1st D.T. N.Sweeney 181'-7". 4th Hm. P. McGrath 208'-0".

**ECAC:** 2nd 1500m N. Davey 4:18.57. 1st 3K S. O'Sullivan 8:58.64.

# SUCCESS



## OUTDOORS

Sonia O'Sullivan ended her outdoor track college career with a highly impressive win in the NCAA 3K in 8:56.74 (9:07.96 heat). Breaking new ground both for herself and for Providence women was Geraldine Hendricken in second place in 9:02.22. Anita Philpott was 5th in 9:12.99. Natalie Davey was 8th in the 1500m final in 4:20.87 (4:21.20 heat). Geraldine Nolan was 12th in 4:31.3 (4:21.69 heat). Sinead Delahunty ran 4:25.30 in the heat. Paddy McGrath ended an outstanding freshman year by reaching the Hammer final where he finished 10th with a fine throw of 203'-6". Cormac Finnerty (Mullingar/Clemson) was 7th in the 5K heat in 14:16.64. Sean Dollman was 4th in the 10K final in 28:39.27.



• Sonia O'Sullivan's brilliant year

## Performance of Note

Aidan O'Reilly (St. Brigids/Penn State) Mile in 4:04.38. Packie Mulvany (Ashbourne/Iona) Mile in 4:02.48. Eddie Bourke (Thurles/Iona) 5K in 14:25.7. Niall Murphy (Kildare/Prov) 3K (8:06.35), 5K(14:26.3). Jonathan Kron (DCH/Princeton) Long Jump (24'-11/4"). Fergal O'Gorman (Raheny/Brown) 800m in 1:52.35. Geoff Sheehan (N.Cork/St.John's) 1000m in 2:28.5. Willie Doyle (Raheny/Harvard) 35lb.wt. (56'-4 1/2"). Emer Molloy (Mullingar/Villanova) 800m in 2:10.15. Susan Smith (Waterford/Brown) 55m (7.26) 55H (8.13). Sonia Coleman (DSD/Brown) 800m in 2:14.67.

## Did You Know?

## PENN RELAYS

No review of U.S. college athletics would be complete without an account of the Irish at Penn. Once again Sonia O'Sullivan stole the show. She anchored the winning Villanova DMR team, running her 1600m leg in 4:27.5, the fastest ever at Penn. Sonia contributed a 2:05 leg to the winning 4x800m team but had to give way to an All-Irish Providence team who set an Irish record when winning the 4x1500m in a time of 17:22.30. Members of the history making team were: Anita Philpott (4:19.6); Geraldine Nolan (4:23.4); Natalie Davey (4:23.9) and Geraldine Hendricken (4:15.4). Aidan O'Regan led off Villanova to a thrilling win in the 4x800m (7:15.55) over No. 1 ranked Georgetown (7:15.73).

The U.S. '90-'91 College year was an outstanding one for Sonia O'Sullivan

and the Providence College girls. The lack of success among the men is alarming, especially when we remember that fifteen to twenty of our leading juniors go on scholarship each year. Injury/illness appear to have claimed some of our best, such as Frank Conway, Bill Mullaney, Derek O'Connor, Brian Hayes, Trevor Sargent. Similarly, among the women Valerie McGovern, Caroline Mullen, Aisling Ryan and Anita Philpott have also suffered injuries. The performances of Sonia O'Sullivan, Geraldine Hendricken, Sinead Delahunty and Niall Bruton were outstanding and now is the time to support and develop these athletes so that we can look forward with pride and expectation to success in Olympic Games and World Championships.

## TO THE U.S. ON SCHOLARSHIP

Among the Irish athletes who have gone to the U.S. on athletic scholarships this year are:

- Mark Carroll (Leevale) to Providence College.
- John Murray (Leevale) to Malone College, Ohio.
- Ken Nason (Leevale) to Villanova.
- Alan Triggs (Leevale) to North Texas
- James Gardiner (Ballycastle) to North Texas.
- Paul Perry (DSD) to Brown University.
- Conor Holt (DSD) to Oklahoma University.
- P.J. O'Rourke (Nenagh) to Malone College.
- Elaine Murphy (Nenagh) to Brown University.
- Eva Flood (Nenagh) to Notre Dame.
- Ciaran Cuneen (Naas) to St. John's N.Y.
- Neil Kernan (Clonliffe) to Murray State.
- Ronan Linscheid (Clonliffe) to St. John's N.Y.

- Three U.S. Eastern Collegiate records are held by Irish athletes: 2 mile 8:26.6 John Hartnett (Grange-Fermoy/Villanova) 1974. 56lb wt. (Indoor) 73'-8" Declan Hegarty (Boston U.) 1984. Shot 55'-11 3/4" Marita Walton (Kilkenny/Maryland) 1982.
- Three Irish were voted by the coaches on to the All-East Cross-Country teams 1990: Sonia O'Sullivan (Villanova), Geraldine Hendricken (Providence) and David Burke (Mullingar/Providence).
- Six Irish were voted by the coaches on to the All-East Indoor teams 1991: Sonia O'Sullivan, Geraldine Hendricken, Sinead Delahunty, Siobhan Gallagher, Niall Murphy and Colm Moran.
- Freshmen Nigel Brunton (Bray), Pat Callanan (Togher) and Breda Gaffney (North Cork) did not return to College in the U.S. for their second year.
- The most famous cross-country course in New York is Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. The course is permanent and is accurately measured. Recently the New York athletics magazine *Eastern Track* published the list of the top 50 performers over the 5 mile course:-
  1. 23:51.0 Dave Merrick (Penn) 1975.
  2. 23:58.1 Curt Alitz (Army) 1976.
  3. 24:00.0 John Hartnett (Grange/Villanova) 1973.
  6. 24:03.4 Mike Keogh (Midleton/Manhattan) 1972.
  15. 24:10.4 Donie Walsh (Leevale/Villanova) 1970.
  47. 24:34.0 Mike O'Shea (Limerick/Providence) 1975.

**PS: Eamonn Coghlan's best time for the course is 24:37.0.**