



Early leaders.

## B.L.E. '83 NATIONAL MARATHON (LETTERKENNY)

# McDAID THE KING

Report and Pictures by BRIAN TANSEY



Left to right: Kieran O'Dwyer, 2nd.; D. McDaid, 1st. and Billy Gallagher, 3rd.

IT WAS Friday, 26th. August: the venue was Ardee and the time was 10 p.m. The best quality 10k race of the year had been run some hours earlier and Sean Callan had just finished presenting a range of prizes which must rank as the best in the country.

Athletes, stewards, officials and a few hangers on (like myself) were settling down for a quiet drink – and hopefully some lively conversation. The talk inevitably turned to the National Marathon to be run two days later “If McGlynn doesn’t win next Sunday – he’ll never win” was the opening shot. “It’s a hilly course – he won’t last the distance” came a reply – “It’s Billy Gallagher’s race – he’s won on that course three or four times already”.

“What about Danny McDaid?” enquired another “he was looking good in Westport last weekend and he’d love to win in front of the home supporters”.

Two days later, from the outset of a National Marathon Championship which started half a mile outside Letterkenny Town, Danny McDaid made it clear that those “home supporters” were going to get a very good run for their money.

He led through 1 mile (5.23) from Mick Walsh (Leevale) and an unnumbered runner – subsequently identified as Patrick Hegarty (his name did not appear in the official programme and it appears his intention was to run 10 miles with the leaders; an exercise I feel which should be discouraged in a National Championship).

This leading group of three remained unchanged over the next 3 miles with the chasing group which included Billy Gallagher (Roscommon), Kieran O’Dwyer (Clonliffe), Mike Porter (U.S.A.), Jim McGlynn (Civil Service) and Tony Kearns (Letterkenny) some 50 metres adrift.

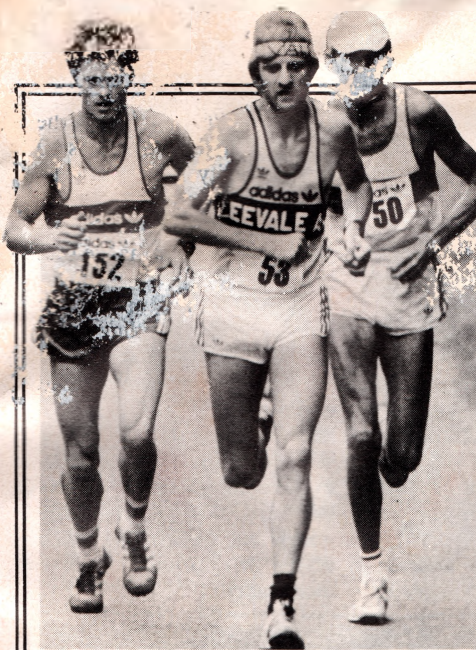
Between miles 4 (21.09 for leaders) and 5 (26.27) Porter made a strong bid and by mile 6 (31.45) he had joined the leading trio. The effort involved however seemed too much for the Californian, for by the 8 mile stage (42.18) he was again drifting off the pace as McGlynn made a sustained drive from a position 100m behind the leaders. Strangely he undertook this task on an uphill stretch and while McDaid’s time for the 9th mile was 5.22, McGlynn ran closer to 5.05.

By mile 10 (53.14) the leading group consisted of three – McGlynn, McDaid and Walsh – with only the latter who was making most of the pace, showing any signs of tiredness. These three remained together through the halfway mark (69.22) where they had a lead of 1 minute over Porter who was a clear 4th ahead of Gallagher, O’Dwyer and Noel McCarron (Letterkenny).

By the 15 mile mark (79.30), it was evident that Walsh was under pressure and with McGlynn pushing the pace the Corkman wilted and within the space of 200 metres he had dropped out of contention.

And now there were two . . . but not for long. By the 18 mile stage McDaid was fully in control and obviously deciding on a long





run home, moving smoothly away from McGlynn on an uphill stretch. McGlynn now paid the price of the fast miles early on and faded out of contention rapidly and at 20 miles dropped out of the race entirely. Conversely McDaid seemed to get stronger as the race went on and he never once faltered over the closing stages. It is interesting to note that his last 10 miles (52.20) was almost a minute faster than his first 10 (53.14).

Meanwhile, down the field, other battles were being fought out. With McGlynn gone at 20, second place was held by Walsh who was at that point, one minute ahead of Gallagher and O'Dwyer with Porter tiring in 5th. place. O'Dwyer, winner of the Dublin County Marathon in a P.B. of 2.29.38 was having the race of his life. Between miles 21 and 22 he surged – passing the fading Walsh and opening a gap of some 150 metres on Gallagher. The latter narrowed this, passing Walsh in the process, to some 20 metres at the finish – but O'Dwyer had gambled and won. His time 2.22.44 was

over 3 minutes behind McDaid's 2.19.08, but a great 7 minutes improvement on his Dublin time.

Mike Porter came home in 5th place and cannot be too displeased with his running, bearing in mind that he had completed the marathon course a week earlier in Bolton. Tony Kearns, who never runs a bad marathon was 6th.

The womens section of the race was won by Theresa Kidd (Ballinascreen A.C.) in 2.52.11 from Marie Murphy (Dundrum), 2.55.42 and Nuala Logan (Limerick) 2.57.33. Lucy O'Donoghue (Leevale) was 4th in 3.02.10. All these times are highly creditable on this tough course and I reckon we will be hearing more from Theresa Kidd over the next few years.

And so, 13 years after he had won his first National Marathon Title, Danny McDaid had now captured his fourth championship victory. (Dick Hooper who was in Letterkenny as a spectator also holds 4 National Titles). Danny accepted the trophy graciously and seemed somewhat amazed, if not embarrassed by the sustained standing ovation accorded him by athletes and supporters alike. He is truly a great athlete and he may even have a card or two up his sleeve for Dublin, yet.

With only one area of exception (mentioned below) the race was very well organised. Dressing rooms; numbers allocation, road markers, feeding stations and after race refreshments were all A1. Full marks here go to the organisers Letterkenny A.C. The problem which did arise was in the area of Traffic Control. In the early stages of the race as the leaders left Letterkenny Town they were almost hit by a car turning a corner, seemingly unaware that a race was on. Danny McDaid was seen to verbally rebuke the stewards at that point.

In the finish area traffic chaos reigned. McDaid was forced to stop 15 yards short

of the finish line as the lead van was stopped by traffic. There were no gardai in evidence and the total 'jam' that occurred made the finish area most uncomfortable for motorists, spectators and runners alike. It seems a shame that 16 years after traffic problems of the inaugural BLE Marathon of 1967, that this problem should raise its head year after year in Championship events.

And that brings me to the question of the annual allocation of the "marathon" to a club. I feel that this idea is a mistake and suggest that BLE should pick a permanent (or at least semi-permanent) National Marathon Course which should have the following qualities.

**1. It should be flat.** This year's marathon programme contained a message from Fr. O'Donnell – President of BLE, which included the following lines . . . "The fact that these championships have been designated as Olympic qualifying races by BLE enhances the importance of the event and it is an incentive to athletes to participate and seek qualifying times which are 2.14 for men and 2.35 for ladies".

And yet the word was out weeks before this event took place that Letterkenny was a slow course and indeed the locals on the day were saying that anyone who broke 2.20 on the course would win. They were right!

**2. It should be held in a place which is easily accessible.** This year 140 athletes finished the marathon compared with 351 last year. Only one national newspaper was prepresented. Surely this is a trend which must worry BLE and indeed the sponsor – on this occasion **adidas**.

**3. It should be in an area where traffic can be controlled.**

**4. Accommodation** should be available locally.

## Results . . . Results . . . Results . . . Results . . . Results . . . Results . . .

1 D. McDaid, Letterkenny A.C., 2.19.08; 2 K. O'Dwyer, Clonliffe A.C., 2.22.44; 3 B. Gallagher, Roscommon H., 2.22.51; 4 M. Walsh, Leevalle A.C., 2.23.00; 5 M. Porter, California U.S.A., 2.24.00; 6 T. Kearns, Kettering Town, 2.26.39; 7 G. O'Neill, Apollo A.C., 2.29.52; 8 T. Hughes, Ballinascreen, 2.33.50; 9 P. Dolan, Clydesdale, 2.34.07; 10 P. Doherty, Letterkenny A.C., 2.34.28.

11 W. McCracken, Newry Shamrocks A.C., 2.35.04; 12 M. Crampsie, Letterkenny A.C., 2.35.06; 13 R. Kinsella, Crusaders A.C., 2.35.30; 14 G. Williamson, Sparta A.C., 2.35.45; 15 P. Byrne, Clonliffe A.C., 2.37.07; 16 T. O'Loughlin, Clonmel A.C., 2.38.03; 17 E. McGrath, Ballybrack, 2.38.50; 18 P. Brady, Clonmel A.C., 2.39.19; 19 P. Higgins, Ballinascreen A.C., 2.40.03; 20 G. Graham, North Down, 2.41.28.

21 B. Brannigan, Newry Shamrocks A.C., 2.41.30; 22 P. Duffy, Beechmount H., 2.42.58; 23 M. Doherty, Beechmount H., 2.43.16; 24 M. McGuire, Beechmount H., 2.43.48; 25 P. Gowan, Templemore Dublin, 2.44.52; 26 J. Hines, Finn Valley, 2.47.44; 27 M. J. Smyth, Cavan A.C., 2.47.47; 28 L. Nolan, Deise A.C., 2.47.59; 29 M. McGuigan, Ballinascreen A.C., 2.49.10; 30 M. Lane, Mullingar H., 2.50.06.

31 N. McCarron, Letterkenny A.C., 2.50.22; 32 P. O'Neill, unattached, 2.51.23; 33 T. Mason, Beechmount H., 2.51.31; 34 T. Kydd, Ballinascreen A.C., 2.52.11 (1st lady);

35 T. Maguire, Civil Service, 2.52.44; 36 M. McCabe, Mullingar H., 2.54.07; 37 D. Kelly, Glaslough, 2.55.01; 38 M. Murphy, Dundrum, 2.55.42 (2nd lady); 39 G. Stacy, unattached, 2.55.49; 40 A. Strain, Donore H., 2.55.49.

41 B. McConville, Unattached, 2.56.04; 42 L. Goulding, Bray Striders (Vet.), 2.56.09; 43 J. Ferry, Unattached, 2.56.17; 44 N. Logan, Limerick A.C., 2.57.33 (3rd lady); 45 R. Lewis, Cavan A.C., 2.58.26; 46 I. Adams, Apollo A.C., 3.00.06; 47 M. Molloy, unattached, 3.00.18; 48 J. Dawson, North Down, 3.01.05; 49 H. Daly, Letterkenny A.C., 3.01.14; 50 W. Doherty, Sparta A.C., 3.01.48.

51 S. Murphy, Leevalle A.C., 3.01.49; 52 L. O'Donoghue, Leevalle A.C., 3.02.10 (4th lady); 53 T. Mannion, Crusaders, 3.02.29; 54 M. McFadden, Clonliffe, 3.02.41; 55 C. Creagh, Mullingar H., 3.03.02; 56 T. Morgan, Mullingar H., 3.05.35; 57 P. J. Leddy, North Leitrim, 3.06.24; 58 M. J. Kavanagh, unattached, 3.06.49; 59 S. Kearns, Crusaders, 3.06.55; 60 B. Patton, Finn Valley, 3.07.14.

61 E. Devenney, Finn Valley, 3.07.14; 62 C. Gallagher, Roscommon H., 3.07.40; 63 B. Worrall, D.C.H., 3.08.16; 64 L. O'Donnell, unattached, 3.08.46; 65 H. Stewart, Letterkenny A.C., 3.08.51; 66 T. O'Toole, Blackrock, 3.09.10; 67 P. Rushe, Cookstown, 3.11.01; 68 B. Gallagher, unattached, 3.11.17; 69 R. Owens, Blackrock, 3.11.30; 70 P. J. McGinley, Letterkenny, 3.11.38.

71 S. Wallace, Letterkenny A.C., 3.11.66; 72 J. Crowe, Clonmel A.C., 3.12.23; 73 P. McGee, Beechmount A.C., 3.12.25; 74 M. Hickey, unattached, 3.13.38; 75 J. Gibson, unattached, 3.13.39; 76 P. Panama, D.C.H., 3.13.44; 77 S. McGuigan, Ballinascreen, 3.14.02; 78 D. Dunne, Derry, 3.14.05; 79 W. O'Connell, Clonmel A.C., 3.14.10; 80 M. Guilfoyle, Crusaders A.C., 3.14.33.

81 T. Guest, Blackrock, 3.15.31; 82 P. Craddock, Blackrock A.C., 3.15.54; 83 W. Morrisson, North Cork, 3.16.14; 84 B. McCoy, unattached, 3.16.41; 85 D. Doyle, North Cork, 3.17.28; 86 S. McCracken, Newry Shamrocks, 3.17.40; 87 G. Coyle, Beechmount H., 3.18.49; 88 I. Maguire, unattached, 3.20.23; 89 S. Gallagher, Roscrea H., 3.20.49; 90 S. Scullion, Ballinascreen H., 3.20.55.

91 D. Coughlin, Sth. Donegal H., 3.20.56; 92 S. McGovern, unattached, 3.21.57; 93 E. O'Sullivan, Crusaders A.C., 3.21.58; 94 D. Nugent, Galway City H., 3.21.59; 95 M. Wright, West Limerick A.C., 3.22.33; 96 M. O'Connell, Cork, 3.24.41; 97 D. Reid, Finn Valley A.C., 3.24.41; 98 N. Casserly, unattached, 3.26.04; 99 M. Gallagher, Stranorlar, 3.27.29; 100 F. Irwin, Finn Valley A.C., 3.27.30.

101 D. McShane, unattached, 3.28.59; 102 J. Doherty, Letterkenny A.C., 3.29.26; 103 P. Breen, Ballinascreen A.C., 3.29.40; 104 J. Cruikshank, unattached, 3.29.44; 105 M.

Commiskey, unattached, 3.30.37; 106 N. Moan, Newry Shamrocks A.C., 3.31.05; 107 J. Devlin, Letterkenny, 3.31.12; 108 J. Scott, Lisburn, 3.32.44; 109 P. J. Lennon, Conigan A.C., 3.32.44; 110 J. McGlinchey, Finn Valley A.C., 3.33.31.

111 E. O'Keefe, Clonliffe H., 3.33.39; 112 R. Fraser, Co. Antrim, 3.36.55; 113 K. Kiely, Letterkenny, 3.38.17; 114 P. Coyle, unattached, 3.40.51; 115 D. Hedderman, unattached, 3.41.43; 116 T. McGee, Newtown, 3.42.51; 117 W. Stewart, Limavady, 3.43.38; 118 P. Dolan, unattached, 3.45.22; 119 W. Bell, unattached, 3.45.34; 120 P. Keogh, Clonmel A.C., 3.47.34.

121 M. Gibbons, unattached, 3.47.34; 122 J. Murdoch, unattached, 3.48.56; 123 A. Gersh, Highgate H., 3.49.38; 124 T. Cleary, Ballinascreen A.C., 3.56.34; 125 B. McGuigan, unattached, 3.57.35; 126 E. Drum, Lifford A.C., 3.57.35; 127 E. Nugent, Galway C.H., 4.01.29; 128 M. Copeland, unattached, 4.02.12; 129 D. Curley, Sth. D.H., 4.09.51; 130 M. Doyle, unattached, 4.15.26. 131 L. Martin, Drogheda, 4.15.40; 132 S. McMenamin, Newtown, 4.15.47; 133 M. Buckley, Limerick, 4.15.48; 134 J. Foley, Finn Valley A.C., 4.15.48; 135 Mgt. McCormack, Letterkenny A.C., 4.22.41; 136 D. Corcoran, Galway, 4.27.39; 137 P. Towey, unattached, 4.28.11; 138 F. Coll, unattached, 4.39.39; 139 D. McDermott, unattached, 4.39.39; 140 A. Motel, unattached, 4.43.00.