



2026 EVENTS

ATHLETICS

Your guide to running events at
an Area and County Level





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Guide to Athletics at Area, County and Provincial Level

Welcome to Athletics in Cairn Community Games!

Athletics is the foundation of our games and has been the most popular event for years. Many athletes who have participated in our events have gone on to achieve national and international success, such as Sophie Becker, **Sharlene Mawdsely**, **Marcus Lawler**, **Molly Scott**, **Gina Akpe-Moses**, **Sarah Lavin**, **Sonia O'Sullivan**, and **Christopher O'Donnell**. Whether your ambition is to compete at the highest level or simply have fun and improve your fitness, athletics is a fantastic way for children to build confidence, discipline, and a love for sport.

This guidebook is designed to help local areas organise athletics events, recruit participants, and connect with key organisations like Athletics Ireland for guidance and additional resources. But first take a look at some important guidance below before you commence your Area's journey in Athletics:

1. **Children First:** The safety of children is paramount. All events must follow Children First guidelines to ensure a safe, child-centred environment. Your Area/County/Province needs a Children's Officer, and this role is a mandated role. There is a dedicated team at Head Office to assist you in your role
2. **Recruitment of Volunteers:** Volunteers are the backbone of Cairn Community Games. Encourage parents, teachers, and community members to get involved. Ensure that volunteers are given induction opportunities at Area Level and are familiar with our [policies and procedures](#).
3. **Garda Vetting:** All volunteers must undergo [Garda vetting](#) to ensure the safety of the children. This is a non-negotiable requirement.
4. **Area Affiliation via the Online Registration System (ORS):** Areas must be affiliated on the [ORS](#) before running events.
5. **Setting of Dates:** National dates are set first, and counties can then set their own event dates accordingly.
6. **Insurance Requirements:** Events can only be insured if the area is affiliated. If specific indemnity is needed for a venue, please contact Head Office. No events should begin before insurance is confirmed by emailing [Head Office](#)
7. **Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement:** It is essential to complete a risk assessment and have a child safeguarding statement in place before any event. Please visit our [Safeguarding Page](#) to find out more.

8. **Code of Conduct:** All adults and parents must sign the [Code of Conduct](#) to ensure a safe and respectful environment.
9. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Equality, diversity and inclusion are essential in Cairn Community Games, ensuring that every child, regardless of background or ability, feels welcome and valued as part of a supportive and enriching experience. Ensure all venues are accessible for all abilities.
10. **Promotion of Events:** Counties have access to Canva Pro accounts, complete with preloaded templates and brand kits. Specific guides on Social Media and PR are available on this [page](#).
11. **GDPR and Consent:** Ensure [GDPR](#) regulations are followed, and consent is obtained for all children participating in events.
12. **Registration of Participants:** All children participating must be registered on the ORS to maintain accurate records and ensure they are insured.
13. **Fill your panels:** When registering team events, please ensure that you fill the panel so that the team will not have to withdraw in case children need to cancel their place.
14. **Residency and Age/Gender Requirements:** Children must reside in the Area where they are participating in events. They must be of the correct age and gender for an event. We use the 31st July as our cut-off date. Please visit our [Age Calculator](#).
15. **Event Rules:** Visit our website [Event Pages](#) for most up to date rules BEFORE organising an event
16. **Fundraising and Support:** Fundraise locally and seek support from local councillors and Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) where possible.
17. **Training:** Keep an eye on our [Training](#) webpage where courses are advertised and can be registered for.
18. **LSP/NGB's:** Contact your local NGB's and Local Sports Partnerships for advice in relation to venues and officials – they can be very helpful. Visit the end of this guide for a full contact list of [Local Sports Partnerships in Ireland](#)
19. **Scheduling/Timetabling:** Be conscious when scheduling Area or County finals that you take into consideration other events happening that day or weekend – ie: local events, NGB events etc. Always check www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events-calendar so that you can plan towards the National Finals!

Relevant Event Webpages

Before deciding to organise a Community Games event, it's essential to visit the relevant webpage for the most up-to-date information. Each event page provides the latest details on rules, age categories, competition formats, and other essential guidelines that could impact your planning.

Staying informed by regularly checking the webpage ensures that you are following current Cairn Community Games rules, helping you avoid any issues or confusion.

- **Athletics Track** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/athletics-track
- **Athletics Field** –
 - **Discus** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/discus
 - **Javelin** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/javelin
 - **Long Puck** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/long-puck
 - **Ball Throw** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/ball-throw
 - **Long Jump** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/long-jump
 - **High Jump** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/high-jump
 - **Shot Putt** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/shot-putt
- **Athletics Relay** – www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/athletics-relay
- **Cross Country**- www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/cross-country
- **Hurdles**- www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/athletics-hurdles
- **5K** – www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/5k
- **Mixed Distance Relay** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/mixed-distance-relay

Athletics: Track Events

www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/athletics-track

Why Track Events?

1. **Enhances Speed and Endurance**

Track events help children develop their running abilities, focusing on both sprinting and long-distance endurance. From short, explosive sprints to longer, stamina-driven races, track events cater to a variety of running talents.

2. **Builds Confidence and Discipline**

Training for track events teaches children the importance of goal-setting, discipline, and perseverance. They gain a sense of achievement as they improve their personal bests and compete against peers.

3. **Instils a Competitive Spirit**

Track events encourage healthy competition, allowing children to compete as individuals and experience the thrill of crossing the finish line. It also instils resilience, as they learn to handle both victory and defeat.

4. **Part of a Proud Tradition**

Track events have long been a staple of Community Games, with many participants going on to compete at higher levels, including international competitions. Famous athletes like Sophie Becker, Gina Apke-Moses, Sarah Lavin, Sonia O'Sullivan, and Christopher O'Donnell started their journeys in athletics, proving the potential that Cairn Community Games can unlock.

5. **Promotes Lifelong Fitness**

Running is a skill that can be continued throughout life. Children who participate in track events often carry their love of athletics into adulthood, using it to maintain fitness and pursue more opportunities in competitive or recreational running.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants**

Reach out to local schools, running clubs, and community groups to recruit participants for track events. Highlight how running is not only a core skill in athletics but also a great way to build fitness, discipline, and confidence.

2. **Age Categories**

Ensure participants are placed in the appropriate age categories for their events, as listed below:

- Boys & Girls Under 8/Over 6: 60M and 80M
- Boys & Girls Under 10/Over 8: 100M and 200M

- Boys & Girls Under 12/Over 10: 100M, 200M, and 600M
- Boys & Girls Under 14/Over 12: 100M, 200M, and 800M
- Boys & Girls Under 16/Over 14: 100M, 200M, and 1500M

3. **Starting and Equipment Rules**

- **Starting Blocks:** Not permitted.
- **Spikes:** Not permitted in Under 8 and Under 10 events.
- **Starting Procedure:** For events with children Under 12 and older, the command “Set” will be given, and all competitors must assume their full and final set position. Any false starts will result in a warning, and two false starts will lead to disqualification. For Under 8 and Under 10 events, referees may call for a re-run without disqualifications.

Area-Level Events

1. **Set a Date**

Choose a date that gives children ample time to practice and allows local schools and running clubs to get involved. Promote the event within your Area to encourage participation and community support.

2. **Track Setup**

Ensure the track is clearly marked with starting lines, finishing lines, and distance markers. Prepare lanes for each age group, ensuring participants can run without interference. Have a whistle or starting pistol on hand for the start of each race.

3. **Officials**

Assign experienced officials to oversee the start, race conduct, and finish of each event. Officials should be in place, with clear communication to participants about their results.

4. **Safety and Fair Play**

Ensure that all children understand the rules of the race, including lane discipline and starting procedures. Emphasise the importance of sportsmanship and encourage children to do their best, regardless of their finishing position.

5. **Encourage Personal Bests**

Support participants by highlighting personal achievements, such as new personal bests or improvements in technique. Celebrate each child's effort, creating a positive and inclusive environment.

County-Level Events

1. **Event Structure**

The County event should mirror the structure of the Area event, with the same age categories and distances. Ensure that all event rules are communicated clearly to participants and officials.

2. **Community Engagement**

Promote the County event as a key community gathering, encouraging local families and supporters to attend. Create an atmosphere of celebration, where each child's efforts are valued.

3. **Event Preparation**

Ensure the track is prepared in advance, with clear lane markings and equipment in place. Double-check that there are enough officials, timekeepers, and volunteers to support a smoothly run event.

Regional Events

- 1st place from County qualifies directly to National Finals.
- 2nd and 3rd place proceed to Regional Qualifier.
- Top 3 from Regional Qualifier advance to National Finals.

Athletics: Field Events

- o **Discus** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/discus
- o **Javelin** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/javelin
- o **Long Puck** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/long-puck
- o **Ball Throw** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/ball-throw
- o **Long Jump** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/long-jump
- o **High Jump** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/high-jump
- o **Shot Putt** - www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/shot-putt

Why Field Events?

1. **Strength, Power, and Precision**

Field events offer children the chance to develop power, strength, and precision. Whether it's throwing a javelin or jumping as far as possible, these events focus on different skill sets from track, helping participants build muscular endurance and coordination.

2. **Diverse Range of Talents**

Field events highlight different athletic abilities, allowing children who may not excel in running to showcase their talents. The technical nature of events like shot putt or long jump gives children an opportunity to master unique skills. Oisín Joyce (Javelin – 1st Bronze medal in the Junior World Championships) and Niamh Fogarty (Discus, European champion) both took part in Cairn Community Games.

3. **Encourages Focus and Patience**

Unlike the fast-paced nature of track events, field events require patience and technical precision. Participants learn to focus their energy and improve their technique over time, often leading to significant personal development.

4. **Future Athletic Opportunities**

Field events have been the starting point for many top athletes. From Sarah Lavin's impressive performances in athletics to young talents developing their jumping or throwing abilities, field events offer a platform for future success in sport.

5. **A Balance of Power and Skill**

Field events encourage children to combine strength and skill, making them ideal for children who enjoy physical challenges. The ability to focus, develop

technique, and perform consistently can lead to success in both athletics and beyond.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants**

Reach out to local schools, youth clubs, and sports centres to find participants for the field events. Emphasise the balance of strength, technique, and discipline needed for these events, making them a great opportunity for children to showcase their skills.

2. **Age Categories and Event Specifications**

Ensure participants are entered into the correct age categories and use the proper weights for throwing events. The categories are:

- **Discus:** Boys & Girls Under 16/Over 14 (1kg discus)
- **Javelin:** Boys & Girls Under 14/Over 12 (400g javelin for girls, 500g for boys)
- **Long Puck:** Boys Under 12/ over 10 & Girls Under 14/Over 12
- **Ball Throw:** Boys & Girls Under 12/Over 10
- **Long Jump:** Boys & Girls Under 12/Over 10 & Boys & Girls Under 14/Over 12
- **High Jump:** Boys & Girls Under 16/Over 14
- **Shot Putt:** Boys Under 14/Over 12 (2.72kg shot), Girls Under 14/Over 12 (2kg shot)

Field Event Guidelines

1. **Discus**

Age Category: Boys & Girls Under 16/Over 14

Weight: 1kg discus.

Participants will have three throws, and the furthest throw within the legal area counts. Ensure safety precautions are in place, as this is a throwing event that requires close supervision. Following each participant's 3 throws the top 8 are then taken and given a further 3 throws. The participants throw in reverse order (the thrower with the furthest throw after the first 3 throws will throw last, the scores from the first round are carried forward).

2. **Javelin**

Age Category: Boys & Girls Under 14/Over 12

Weight: 400g javelin Girls, 500g for boys

Children will throw the javelin three times, with the farthest legal throw being recorded. Emphasise proper technique, including the approach and release of the javelin, as this can significantly impact the outcome. Following each

participant's 3 throws the top 8 are then taken and given a further 3 throws. The participants throw in reverse order (the thrower with the furthest throw after the first 3 throws will throw last, the scores from the first round are carried forward).

3. **Long Puck**

Age Category: Boys Under 12/over 10 & Girls Under 14/Over 12

Participants use a hurley to strike a sliotar (ball) as far as possible. Each child gets three attempts, and the longest puck counts. Ensure a safe area is designated for the puck's flight path. Following each participant's 3 pucks the top 8 are then taken and given a further 3 throws. The participants throw in reverse order (the thrower with the furthest throw after the first 3 throws will throw last, the scores from the first round are carried forward).

4. **Ball Throw**

Age Category: Boys & Girls Under 12/Over 10

Children will throw a ball as far as possible, with each child getting three attempts. Proper safety measures and clear distance markers should be in place. Following each participant's 3 throws the top 8 are then taken and given a further 3 throws. The participants throw in reverse order (the thrower with the furthest throw after the first 3 throws will throw last, the scores from the first round are carried forward).

5. **Long Jump**

Age Category: Boys & Girls Under 12/Over 10, Boys & Girls Under 14/Over 12 (2 age groups)

Participants will jump from a marked board into a sandpit. Each child has three jumps, and the farthest legal jump is recorded. Ensure accurate measurement and a well-prepared sandpit for safe landings. Following each participant's 3 jumps the top 8 are then taken and given a further 3 jumps. The participants jump in reverse order (the jumper with the furthest jump after the first 3 jumps will jump last, the scores from the first round are carried forward).

6. **High Jump**

Age Category: Boys & Girls Under 16/Over 14

Competitors will have three attempts to clear each height, with the bar being raised progressively. Emphasise proper jumping technique and safety in landing.

7. **Shot Putt**

Age Category: Boys Under 14/Over 12 (2.72kg shot), Girls Under 14/Over 12 (2kg shot)

Each participant will throw the shot putt from within a designated circle. They are allowed three throws, and the farthest legal throw counts. Ensure the correct weight shot putt is used for each age category. Following each participant's 3 throws the top 8 are then taken and given a further 3 throws.

The participants throw in reverse order (the thrower with the furthest throw after the first 3 throws will throw last, the scores from the first round are carried forward).

Area-Level Events

1. **Set a Date**

Plan the field events to allow plenty of time for participants to practice and perfect their techniques. Encourage spectators to attend and cheer on the competitors.

2. **Field Setup**

Ensure that the field area is clearly marked and designated for each event. Use safety nets and distance markers where necessary, especially for throwing events like javelin and discus.

3. **Assign Experienced Officials**

Ensure that experienced officials oversee each event. They must be well-versed in the rules and safety procedures for their respective event, from measuring throws and jumps to ensuring fair play.

4. **Promote Skill Development**

Create an atmosphere where participants can focus on improving their personal techniques and achieving their best. Offer tips and advice from officials to encourage learning and development.

5. **Provide Feedback and Recognition**

After the event, offer constructive feedback to help participants improve their performance. Recognise their efforts and celebrate their progress, regardless of where they place in the competition.

County-Level Events

1. **Plan for a Full Day of Competition**

Organise the county finals to feature both track and field events, creating an all-day festival of athletics. Encourage community members, families, and friends to come out and support their local athletes.

2. **Field Event Safety and Setup**

Follow the same setup and safety guidelines used for area-level events, ensuring that the field is properly prepared and that enough space is available for each event. Provide clear safety zones and guidance for spectators.

3. **Celebrate Achievements**

The top two participants from each field event will qualify directly for the National Finals. Celebrate their achievements and encourage all participants to continue honing their skills.

Athletics: Hurdles

www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/athletics-hurdles

Why Hurdles?

1. **Develops Agility and Speed** Hurdles help children improve their agility, speed, and coordination by navigating over obstacles at a fast pace, making it a fantastic challenge for young athletes.
2. **Encourages Focus and Discipline** Timing, rhythm, and precision are key in hurdles, which teach participants to focus and control their movements under pressure.
3. **A Foundation for Future Athletics** Many successful athletes started with hurdles in their youth. Sarah Lavin, Ireland's star hurdler, began her journey at a young age in Cairn Community Games. Even rugby star Robbie Henshaw participated in hurdles, highlighting how this sport can help build skills useful in multiple athletic careers.
4. **A Fun Introduction to Track Events** Hurdles add excitement to traditional running events, keeping children engaged and excited to improve their personal bests.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants** Encourage children from local schools and athletics clubs to participate. Highlight the fun and challenge of hurdles, and how the event helps build speed and coordination that can benefit their other sports.
2. **Age Categories**
 - Under 10/Over 8 – 60 metres
 - Under 14/Over 12 – 80 metres
3. **Event Setup**
 - U10: 4 hurdles, 45cm high, spaced 10m apart. 15m run-up and 15m finish.
 - U14: 8 hurdles, 68.6cm high, spaced 8m apart. 12m run-up and 12m finish.
4. **Equipment** Ensure the correct hurdles are used based on age group heights and spacing. Hurdles must comply with the rules outlined by the IAAF.

Area-Level Events

1. **Set a Date** Choose a date that allows athletes enough time to train. Publicise the event well in advance through schools, athletics clubs, and social media.

2. **Track Setup** Ensure the hurdles are correctly spaced and at the correct height based on age group. The event should have clear starting and finishing lines, and ample space for spectators to watch.
3. **Assign Adjudicators and Timekeepers** Assign experienced athletics officials or coaches to oversee the races and ensure fair play. Timekeepers are essential to track results and confirm finishes.
4. **Run a Fair Competition** Ensure all athletes understand the rules and are aware of false start penalties. At U10 level, the Activities Director can order a re-run without disqualification after consulting the starter and judges.
5. **Encourage Support** Encourage participants to cheer each other on, fostering a sense of community and teamwork among the young athletes.

County-Level Events

1. **Prepare the County Event** Follow the same structure as the Area event. Set up the track with the correct hurdle measurements and ensure the presence of trained adjudicators and timekeepers.
2. **Celebrate Participation** Ensure athletes are congratulated on their achievements, regardless of placement. Hurdles are a challenging event, and all participants should feel proud of their efforts.
3. **Qualifying for Regional and National Finals**
 - 1st place from County qualifies straight to the National Finals.
 - 2nd and 3rd place finishers move to a Regional Qualifier.
 - The top 3 from the Regional Qualifier progress to the National Finals.

Athletics: Relay Races

www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/athletics-relay

Why Relays?

1. **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Relay races are the ultimate test of teamwork, requiring every member of the team to contribute equally to achieve victory. Children develop essential collaboration and communication skills, learning how to rely on each other for success. Notably, Olympians Sophie Becker and Sharlene Mawdsley, who competed in relays at both the Olympics and the European Championships, started their athletic journeys in Cairn Community Games.

2. **Enhances Speed and Coordination**

Relays push participants to perform at their best while coordinating the smooth handoff of the baton. This combination of speed, accuracy, and timing makes relay races one of the most exciting track events in athletics.

3. **Instils Accountability and Focus**

Each leg of a relay race is crucial, and children quickly learn the importance of their role within the team. It encourages accountability and precision, as any mistake can affect the entire team's outcome.

4. **Builds Excitement and Team Spirit**

There's nothing like the energy of a relay race! Whether running the final leg or supporting teammates, children experience the thrill of competition in a way that builds camaraderie, resilience, and sportsmanship.

5. **Preparation for Future Sports**

Relays are great preparation for future team-based sports. The quick-thinking, pacing, and coordination skills learned here translate well into other athletic activities, fostering growth in a wide range of sports.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants**

Contact schools, sports clubs, and local athletics teams to recruit participants for relay teams. Explain how relay events promote teamwork, speed, and focus. Teams consist of 4 runners with a panel of 6.

2. **Age Categories and Event Specifications**

Ensure participants are entered into the correct age categories:

- **Mixed U/10 Over 8:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6 (3 boys, 3 girls)
- **Boys U/12 Over 10:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6
- **Girls U/12 Over 10:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6

- **Mixed U/13 Over 10:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6 (3 boys, 3 girls)
 - **Boys U/14 Over 12:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6
 - **Girls U/14 Over 12:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6
 - **Mixed U/15 Over 13:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6 (3 boys, 3 girls)
 - **Boys U/16 Over 14:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6
 - **Girls U/16 Over 14:** 4 x 100M Relay – Panel of 6
 - **Mixed U/16 Over 14:** 4 x 200M Relay – Panel of 6 (3 boys, 3 girls)
3. **Promote Participation**
Encourage local schools and clubs to form teams. Emphasise the exciting and team-oriented nature of relay races, where every participant's contribution is crucial for success.

Event Guidelines

1. **Relay Structure**
In relay races, 4 runners compete on a team, each running a section of the track and handing off a baton to the next runner. A panel of 6 means that 2 additional runners can be substitutes, providing flexibility throughout the competition.
2. **Rules for Mixed Relays**
For mixed relays (U/10, U/13, U/15, U/16), teams must consist of 3 boys and 3 girls for the 4 x 100M and 4 x 200M relays. Any member of the panel can run any leg of the relay at any stage of the competition.
3. **Starting Procedures and False Starts**
The starter will use a whistle or starter's gun to begin the race. The "Set" command requires all competitors, except U/10 runners, to assume their final set position immediately.
Any competitor responsible for two false starts will be disqualified, except in U/10 events where a re-run may be ordered after consulting with officials.
4. **Baton Handoff**
Relay races require the baton to be passed within a specific zone. Emphasise the importance of timing and coordination in the handoff to avoid penalties or disqualification.
5. **Uniform Requirements**
At the National Finals, county numbers must be displayed on the front and back of competitors' vests. Proper team attire and footwear are essential to ensure uniformity and safety.

Area-Level Events

1. **Plan the Day**

Set a date for the area-level relay events, ensuring that teams have adequate time to practice their handoffs and pacing. Create a competitive but supportive environment to promote team spirit.

2. **Track Setup**

Ensure the track is marked properly, especially the exchange zones where baton handoffs will occur. Organise a safe and controlled space for warm-up areas and team support zones.

3. **Assign Experienced Officials**

Ensure qualified officials are in place to supervise the baton handoffs and monitor the start and finish lines. They should be familiar with the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) rules to ensure fair play.

4. **Encourage Sportsmanship**

Promote sportsmanship and teamwork, encouraging participants to support one another both within and outside of their teams. Highlight the excitement of relays as a collective experience.

5. **Provide Feedback**

After the event, offer feedback to the teams on their performances, especially in areas like pacing and baton handoff. This will help them improve their techniques for future competitions.

County-Level Events

1. **Celebrate Team Spirit**

The county-level relay events are a celebration of teamwork and speed. Organise a full day of competition where teams from different areas can compete and show their progress. Ensure there is ample space for families and spectators to support the athletes.

2. **Prepare the Track**

Ensure the track is set up to meet competition standards, with clearly marked exchange zones for baton handoffs. Provide adequate space for warming up and post-race cool-downs.

3. **Highlight the Importance of Teamwork**

Remind competitors that teamwork is just as important as individual speed. Focus on perfecting handoffs, pacing, and communication within the team to ensure smooth transitions during the race.

National Finals

One relay team from each county will qualify for the National Finals at SETU Carlow. There are no provincial finals for relay races. At the National Finals, teams will

compete against the best from other counties. Special attention will be given to rules around baton handoff and timing, as these are critical in relay competitions. Team uniforms, proper handoff techniques, and starting procedures will all follow IAAF rules.

Cross Country

www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/cross-country

Why Cross Country?

1. **A True Test of Endurance**

Cross country is the ultimate endurance challenge, testing both mental and physical stamina. Running over varied terrain, children develop resilience and perseverance as they push themselves to the limit.

2. **Promotes Healthy Lifestyle Habits**

Cross country encourages children to stay active and promotes a love for outdoor activity. It's an excellent way for young athletes to build cardiovascular fitness and strength, laying the foundation for a lifelong healthy lifestyle.

3. **Fosters Team Spirit and Individual Achievement**

Cross country is a unique blend of individual effort and team results. While each runner competes for personal achievement, the team's overall score depends on the collective performance. This balance encourages both self-discipline and teamwork.

4. **Develops Mental Toughness**

Navigating through varied terrains and distances helps children develop mental toughness and focus. The ability to endure and keep going even when it gets tough is a valuable skill in sports and life.

5. **A Gateway to Competitive Running**

Many accomplished runners, including Olympians, have started in cross country. The skills learned here: pacing, endurance, and determination, will help children succeed in track and field events and other endurance sports in the future.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants**

Reach out to schools, local running clubs, and athletics organisations to form your area's team. Encourage participation by emphasising the excitement of team competition and the personal satisfaction of completing a challenging course. Teams consist of 10 participants (5 boys and 5 girls), with a minimum of 3 boys and 3 girls required.

2. **Age Category and Event Specifications**

- Under 13/Over 11
- Panel of 10 (5 boys and 5 girls).
- Distance: 1,200 meters.

- Spikes are permitted.
3. **Promote Participation**
Use flyers, social media, and local events to encourage participation. Highlight the benefits of cross country, including fitness, endurance, and teamwork. Emphasise that this is a county representative event, meaning participants will represent their county at the National Festival if selected.

Event Guidelines

1. **Team Composition**
Each team must have a minimum of 3 boys and 3 girls, with the top 3 finishers in each category contributing to the team's score. A full panel consists of 10 runners, and all team members are encouraged to participate at the National Festival.
2. **Panel Submission**
Once a panel is submitted via the Online Registration System (ORS), changes are not permitted unless in exceptional circumstances. Replacements can only be made with a valid reason submitted by the County Secretary at least 48 hours before the event. A three-person Event Management Committee will adjudicate any replacement applications.
3. **Competition Structure**
Depending on the number of participants, semi-finals may be held at the National Festival, but this will be at the discretion of the Activities Director. If no semi-finals are necessary, the event will be run as a straight final.
4. **Scoring System**
The first 3 boys and 3 girls from each team over the finish line will count toward the team's final placing. The team with the best combined score will be declared the winner.
5. **Individual Medals**
The first 3 boys and the first 3 girls in the mixed U/13 final will receive individual medals.

Area-Level Events

1. **Plan the Course**
Organise an area-level cross country event with varied terrain to challenge the participants. Ensure the course is safe and well-marked for the runners, with appropriate distances for the age group.
2. **Promote Team Participation**
Emphasise the importance of teamwork, while encouraging individual runners to aim for personal bests. Make the event a celebration of endurance and team spirit.

3. **Assign Officials**

Ensure qualified officials and timekeepers are present to oversee the race and record finishing times. Officials should be familiar with the rules, especially regarding the team scoring system and the use of spikes.

4. **Post-Race Feedback**

Provide feedback to the runners, highlighting their strengths and offering tips for improvement. This will help them prepare for the County and National events.

County-Level Events

1. **Celebrate Endurance and Team Spirit**

The county event should be a celebration of endurance and teamwork. Organise a full day of cross-country races, encouraging family and community support for the athletes.

2. **Prepare the Course**

Ensure the course is challenging yet safe, with clear markings and adequate supervision. Provide warm-up areas and post-race recovery zones for the participants.

3. **Encourage Team Unity**

Remind the runners that every participant's contribution is valuable. Focus on team cohesion, strategy, and pacing to ensure a successful county event.

National Finals

At the National Festival, all participants present from the original panel are expected to compete. The event will either be a straight final or include semi-finals, depending on the number of participants. This decision is at the discretion of the Activities Director.

The use of spikes is permitted, and the course will be 1,200 meters long. A well-trained and cohesive team is crucial for success at the national level, as both individual and team performances contribute to the final outcome.

5K Run

www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/5k

Why 5k?

1. **Endurance and Determination**

5k challenges participants both mentally and physically, teaching them perseverance and the importance of long-term commitment. Running a 5km pushes children to develop their stamina and determination.

2. **A New 5km Distance**

The updated 5km distance makes it a more accessible challenge while still demanding endurance and resilience. Training for this event encourages children to improve their fitness levels while setting personal goals.

3. **Part of a Global Tradition**

Long-distance running is celebrated worldwide, from the Olympics to local races and this event helps young athletes feel part of that tradition.

4. **Healthy Lifestyle**

Preparing for 5km promotes a healthy lifestyle by encouraging regular physical activity. Running boosts cardiovascular fitness, builds strength, and enhances overall well-being.

5. **Fun and Community-Based Training**

Children can practice at local **Park Runs**, which are free 5km community events held across Ireland. Find local runs using the Park Run Location Finder.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants**

Reach out to local schools, running clubs, and community groups to recruit children who enjoy long-distance running. Emphasise that this is an individual event, but counties can form a team of 3 or 4 runners, adding a team-based element to the competition.

2. **Age Categories**

The 5K is open to boys and girls in the following category:

- Under 16/Over 14

3. **Spikes and Running Gear**

Spikes are not permitted in 5k events. Participants should wear appropriate running shoes and comfortable athletic clothing to ensure safety and ease during the race.

Event Guidelines

1. **Course and Distance**

The course will cover a 5km distance. It can be run on any surface, so consider holding practice sessions on different terrains to prepare participants for various conditions.

2. **Team Structure**

Counties can enter one or more individuals up to a maximum of 4. If 3 or 4 athletes compete, it constitutes a team. At the National Festival, teams must consist of 3 runners, with the total score determining the result.

3. **Panel Selection**

It is at the discretion of each county to determine how the representative team is selected. Once the panel is submitted, it cannot be changed unless in exceptional circumstances, with applications for replacements adjudicated by a panel from the Event Management Committee.

Area-Level Events

1. **Plan the Route**

Organise a 5km course that is clearly marked and meets safety standards. Ensure the terrain provides some variety to challenge participants while still being safe for children to run.

2. **Promote the Event**

Use flyers, social media, and school newsletters to promote the 5k, encouraging participants to join and practice by attending local park runs or community running events.

3. **Assign Officials**

Qualified officials should oversee the event, ensuring proper timing and adherence to the rules. Safety personnel should be available to provide first aid if necessary.

4. **Post-Race Recognition**

Celebrate participants' efforts with certificates, medals, or other forms of recognition. Highlight their endurance and determination and offer feedback to help them improve.

County-Level Events

1. **Prepare the County Event**

The county event should follow the same structure as the area event, with a well-planned course and proper safety measures in place. Ensure that runners understand the importance of pacing and perseverance in long-distance events.

2. **Celebrate Endurance**

Make the county marathon event a celebration of the athletes' hard work and resilience, encouraging families and the community to support the participants.

National Finals

The 5k event at the National Festival will highlight the top long-distance runners from each county. It is a team-based event with counties allowed to enter up to 4 athletes, and the first 3 to cross the finish line will count towards the team's overall score.

All members present at the National Festival should participate. The first four boys and the first four girls in the individual 5k final will be awarded individual medals.

Mixed Distance Relay

www.cairncommunitygames.ie/events/mixed-distance-relay

Why Mixed Distance Relay?

1. **Combines Endurance and Speed**

Mixed Distance Relay is a unique event that combines both short and long-distance running, challenging participants to develop both endurance and speed. It's a dynamic race that demands both stamina and quick bursts of energy.

2. **Fosters Team Coordination**

This event is all about teamwork, as boys and girls must work together to achieve a common goal. It builds strong bonds as teammates rely on one another to run their best leg of the race.

3. **Develops Strategic Thinking**

Mixed Distance Relay requires runners to think strategically, as each team member has a different role in the relay. This helps children develop a sense of responsibility, timing and coordination with their teammates.

4. **Promotes Fitness and Health**

As a relay race combining distances of 400, 600, and 800 metres, the event encourages a healthy, active lifestyle. Children develop cardiovascular fitness, strength and endurance as they prepare for the race.

5. **Pathway to Future Athletic Success**

Mixed Distance Relay is a perfect introduction to more advanced team and individual running events. The skills and discipline learned here can pave the way for future success in athletics.

Getting Started

1. **Recruit Participants**

Recruit children who enjoy both short and long-distance running. Encourage participation through schools, running clubs, and athletics programmes. Each County's panel consists of six participants (3 boys and 3 girls), with four runners competing in the event.

2. **Age Categories**

- Under 12 Over 10
- Under 14 Over 12

Separate competitions will be held for boys and girls.

3. **Promote Participation**

Highlight the fun and challenge of competing in a relay that combines different

distances. Use flyers, social media, and school newsletters to attract participants.

4. **Spikes Permitted**

Spikes are allowed in this event, giving participants the chance to enhance their performance, particularly over the varying terrain of the cross-country course.

Event Guidelines

1. **Race Format and Distance**

The race is run over a cross-country course with each runner covering a different distance, depending on their leg of the relay:

- **Under 12:** 400 and 600 metres
- **Under 14:** 600 and 800 metres

The race will be run in the following order:

- **Under 12 (400 & 600 metres):**
 - 1st Runner – 600 metres
 - 2nd Runner – 400 metres
 - 3rd Runner – 600 metres
 - 4th Runner – 400 metres
- **Under 14 (600 & 800 metres):**
 - 1st Runner – 800 metres
 - 2nd Runner – 600 metres
 - 3rd Runner – 800 metres
 - 4th Runner – 600 metres

2. **Team Selection**

The County panel must be made up of the first 3 boys and 3 girls who finish the 400 and 600 metres (U12) or 600 and 800 metres (U14) events at the County Finals.

3. **Rules for Participants**

- Each runner may only run one leg of the relay.
- Teams will be selected from heats, with a designated number of teams from each heat progressing to the final.

Area-Level Events

1. **Plan the Event**

Organise an area-level Mixed Distance Relay event, focusing on both the excitement of the race and the importance of teamwork. Ensure that the course is clearly marked and safe for all participants.

2. **Promote the Event**

Use flyers, school bulletins, and social media to promote the event. Highlight the mixed nature of the relay, encouraging boys and girls to work together.

3. **Assign Officials**

Ensure that qualified officials oversee the event, from timekeepers to referees who can ensure that all rules are followed, particularly the order of runners and adherence to relay distances.

4. **Post-Race Feedback**

After the race, offer feedback to the runners, celebrating their efforts and encouraging them to continue developing their relay and distance running skills.

County-Level Events

1. **Prepare the Course**

The county event should feature a well-prepared cross-country course that includes both short and long sections. Ensure that officials are familiar with the specific rules of the Mixed Distance Relay and are prepared to manage the heats efficiently.

2. **Celebrate Teamwork**

Make the event a celebration of teamwork, with encouragement for both individual achievements and the collective effort of the team. Include recognition for participants in both the short and long-distance legs.

National Finals

The Mixed Distance Relay at the National Festival may feature semi-finals or a straight final, depending on the number of participants. This decision will be made by the Activities Director. All participants from the County panel should compete, and spikes are permitted.

Additional Resources and Websites

For more information and guidance on athletics, you can visit the following websites. These resources provide details on national governing bodies, diversity, and equality initiatives that can support athletes and organisers. Always refer to the Cairn Community Games website to ensure you have the correct rules and event guidelines.

1. **Athletics Ireland** – www.athleticsireland.ie
The national governing body for athletics in Ireland. They offer coaching resources, training programmes, and competition structures for athletes at all levels.
2. **Sport Ireland** – www.sportireland.ie
Oversees the development of sport in Ireland, promoting participation, physical fitness, and well-being. They also provide support to National Governing Bodies and high-performance athletes.
3. **Federation of Irish Sport** – www.irishsport.ie
A representative body for Ireland's sporting organisations, supporting the development of sport through policy advocacy, research, and communication.
4. **Her Moves** – www.hermoves.ie
A campaign aimed at encouraging girls and women to participate in physical activities, providing opportunities for young female athletes to develop their skills and confidence.
5. **Active Disability Ireland** – www.activedisability.ie
Focuses on promoting sport and physical activity for people with disabilities, offering programmes and resources to ensure inclusive participation in sports across Ireland.
6. **Children First** – www.tusla.ie
The national guidelines for child protection and welfare in Ireland. All sporting bodies and organisations working with children must follow these guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of young athletes.
7. **Irish Centre for Diversity** – www.irishcentrefordiversity.ie
Works to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in workplaces, communities, and organisations, including sports clubs and governing bodies.
8. **Jigsaw** – www.jigsaw.ie
A national centre for youth mental health, offering support and resources to young people, particularly focusing on how physical activity can improve mental health.
9. **Foróige** – www.foroige.ie
One of Ireland's leading youth organisations, offering leadership, life skills,

and development opportunities through community-based programmes, including sports initiatives.

10. **SpunOut** – www.spunout.ie

Ireland's youth information website providing health and well-being advice, including articles on the importance of sports and physical activity for youth development.

11. **National Youth Council of Ireland** – www.youth.ie

A representative body for youth organisations in Ireland, supporting young people's engagement in various activities, including sports and cultural events.

List of Local Sports Partnerships in Ireland

➤ **Carlow Sports Partnership**

Website: www.carlowsports.ie

Email: info@carlowsports.ie

➤ **Cavan Sports Partnership**

Website: www.cavansportspartnership.ie

Email: info@cavansportspartnership.ie

➤ **Clare Sports Partnership**

Website: www.claresports.ie

Email: info@claresports.ie

➤ **Cork Sports Partnership**

Website: www.corksports.ie

Email: info@corksports.ie

➤ **Donegal Sports Partnership**

Website: www.activedonegal.com

Email: info@activedonegal.com

➤ **Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership**

Website: www.dcswphub.ie

Email: sports@dublincity.ie

➤ **Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Sports Partnership**

Website: www.dlrsportspartnership.ie

Email: info@dlrsportspartnership.ie

➤ **Fingal Sports Partnership**

Website: sports.fingal.ie/

Email: info@fingal.ie

➤ **Galway Sports Partnership**

Website: www.galwayactive.ie

Email: info@galwayactive.ie

➤ **Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership**

Website: www.facebook.com/kerryrecreationandsportspartnership/

Email: info@kerryrecreationandsports.ie

- **Kildare Sports Partnership**
Website: www.kildarecoco.ie/kildaresp/
Email: info@kildaresp.ie
- **Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership**
Website: www.krsp.ie
Email: info@krsp.ie
- **Laois Sports Partnership**
Website: www.laoissports.ie
Email: info@laoissports.ie
- **Leitrim Sports Partnership**
Website: www.leitrimsports.ie
Email: sports@leitrimcoco.ie
- **Limerick Sports Partnership**
Website: www.limericksports.ie
Email: info@limericksports.ie
- **Longford Sports Partnership**
Website: www.longfordsports.ie
Email: info@longfordsports.ie
- **Louth Local Sports Partnership**
Website: www.louthlsp.com
Email: info@louthlsp.ie
- **Mayo Sports Partnership**
Website: www.mayosports.ie
Email: msp@mayococo.ie
- **Meath Local Sports Partnership**
Website: www.meathsports.ie
Email: mlsp@meathcoco.ie
- **Monaghan Sports Partnership**
Website: www.monaghansports.ie
Email: info@monaghansports.ie
- **Offaly Sports Partnership**
Website: www.offalysports.ie
Email: sports@offalycoco.ie
- **Roscommon Sports Partnership**
Website: www.rosactive.org
Email: info@rosactive.org
- **Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership**
Website: www.sligosportandrecreation.ie
Email: info@sligosportandrecreation.ie
- **South Dublin County Sports Partnership**
Website: www.sdcc.ie/en/services/sport-and-recreation/sports/
Email: info@sdcc.ie

- **Tipperary Sports Partnership**
Website: www.tipperarysports.ie
Email: info@tipperarysports.ie
- **Waterford Sports Partnership**
Website: www.waterfordsportspartnership.ie
Email: info@waterfordsportspartnership.ie
- **Westmeath Sports Partnership**
Website: www.westmeathsports.ie
Email: info@westmeathsports.ie
- **Wexford Sports Partnership**
Website: www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/sports-and-recreation
Email: info@sportwexford.ie
- **Wicklow Local Sports Partnership**
Website: www.wicklowlsp.ie
Email: wicklowlsp@wicklowcoco.ie



www.cairncommunitygames.ie