
Mary Donohoe

Q: You took your first ever national title yesterday in Santry. Well done. How did the race go for you Mary? And at what stage did you feel you had it won.

A: I think coming up the home straight, there is a small little uphill climb and someone out of Clonliffe said go on Mary it's all yours. It just clicked with me then that I had it. The last 100m was terrific. I was expecting to fall out of bed any minute and the dream to be over. It was a great feeling and one I will not forget for a long long time.

Q: From the very start of the race how did it go for you?

A: There was a very strong breeze out, as you will remember. I had no intention of taking up the running, I felt that I might just burn myself up and I just wanted to stick with the group, as I intended from the start, and play it by ear and see how the race progressed. Patricia Griffin took up the lead early on and after 800m. Greta Hickey went into the lead. I stuck on Greta's shoulder, with the intention of sitting in behind her and let her take the pressure. When it came to the final lap, I found myself feeling very strong, but I was still hesitant to go into the lead and I found Greta either just faded or I got stronger and I found I was 5 metres ahead of her and next thing I heard someone say that I had 10 metres on her. As I came nearer the finish of the lap, I was much more determined to keep going, keep the pace up, and not let anyone take the race from me, and it was only in the last 100m. that I realised where I was and what I was doing, and then it dawned on me.

Q: Were you surprised that Ann Hilliard wasn't up there with you?

A: It was not until the end of the race that I saw Ann had fallen and muck all over her. I knew that she was with us, with people calling and encouraging her in the race. I sensed Ann behind me but I never look back, I had no indication how near she was to me. I knew towards the end of the second lap, that it was Greta who was the second girl, but I did not know when I pulled away, that it was Greta who took over Ann or what was going on behind me at all.

Q: The ground was hard on the day. Did it effect you.

A: It didn't really think about it to be honest. If it's going to be hard or soft it's going to be the same for everybody. Al-

The day after her win in the Nationals she spoke to Ken Harris about the race.



**“A Dream
Come True”
after only 2
years running**

though it was the same course as the Dublin's, it was a totally different race all together. The Dublin Cross Country was physically, I found more demanding on myself. I was exhausted when I finished and I had to struggle through parts of the course where yesterday was very hard with one small section heavy or muddy.

Q: That was your first National title after only two years in athletics. I remember going out for a run with you, Ann Keenan and Noel Quinn, and at that time you were considering whether to devote more time to hockey, which you were playing at the time and try to make the Irish team. Or start from the very bottom in athletics and work your way up to an international. Are you glad you made the move?

A: Very much so. With hockey, the whole team needs to be at their best to win, but in athletics, it's up to the individual to make it not the team.

Q: Kathryn Davis, another National winner from many years ago, has taken you under her wing and coached and helped you along.

A: I have been very lucky really, Kathryn has put a lot of work into the womens squad and at this stage we have 9 athletes and have an awful lot to thank her for. She stays in the background and deserves every bit of praise for her help with the ladies' section in Clonliffe. She gives a lot of time and effort.

Q: Going on the World Cross Countries in Switzerland in March. Are you looking forward to them?

A: I am very much. I just hope I can do myself justice and not just go out and run and say I ran in the World C.C. I want to go out and do myself and my country justice.

Q: Going back to yesterdays race, it was a great thing for you to win the National especially with this being Clonliffe's Centenary Year.

A: Very much. That meant more to me than anything really. It was a great feeling running at home and only 10 minutes from my house so it made all the difference and also having all the local support.

Q: The very best in the World C.C.

A: Thanks Ken. I hope I can do my very best.