

## Kelly Rules Indoors!



Ferrybank athlete Kelly Proper proudly displays her medals as she took her total of senior indoor titles to 19 by winning the long jump, 60m and 200m at the National Indoor Championships in Athlone last weekend. | Photo : Pat Murphy / Sportsfile

Ferrybank's Kelly Proper enhanced her reign as Ireland's greatest indoor athlete when claiming gold in the long jump, 60 metres and 200 metres in the National Championships held last weekend in Athlone IT.

Extending her record-breaking haul of national indoor golds to 19, Kelly leapt to victory in the long jump, an event she has dominated since 2006, with a 6.22 metre jump securing top spot on the podium.

However, Kelly's brace of track wins were particularly notable thanks to the new personal bests she set in both, with her 200 metre win propelling her to the top of this year's European rankings.

First up on Sunday was a 60m heat in which Kelly came in second, just a hundredth of second behind leading qualifier Ciara Neville (Emerald AC) in 7.45 seconds.

But the final was all about the Ferrybank and Ireland athlete who fleetly out of the blocks to win in 7.38 seconds, a considerable improvement on her previous best over the distance.

Forty minutes later, Kelly was in the blocks again in a 200 m final for which no heats were held. And what a performance she produced to claim her third gold of the weekend, completing the circuit in a new personal best of 23.27 seconds, the fastest time in Europe this year and the second fastest run ever by an Irish woman over the distance.

She missed out on achieving the World (outdoor) Championship standard by just .07 of a second, and given her current form will feel she can lower her new PB even further in order to secure a seat on the flight to Beijing come August next.

Meanwhile, Paul Murphy (Ferrybank AC) had a fine run in the 400m final, finishing second with a personal best time of 47.62 seconds.

The race was won by Dara Kervick (a second cousin of Kelly Proper's) in 45.63 in the colours of Clonliffe Harriers, whom until recently had run for Carrick-on-Suir AC.

Three local athletes also collected bronze medals, namely outgoing 800 metres champion Niall Tuohy who, in a most competitive final ran well eventually finishing third in 1:52.35.

The Ferrybank AC man finished behind two of Ireland's best 800 metres runners, Mark English who won in 1.51.34, with Declan Murray in second.

Brother and sister Thomas and Lisa Houlihan (West Waterford) both had good results in the pole vault collecting bronze medals; Thomas achieving 4.60 metres while Lisa vaulted 2.90 metres.

Kevin Cooper (Ferrybank) finished sixth in the 3000m final while Seán Curran (West Waterford) was seventh in his 1500m heat.

But the weekend belonged to Kelly Proper, whose form keeps getting better and better!