

Once again we had a slow start to the eventing season. This time it wasn't weather but a disagreement between the Event Organisers & EI over funding of events initially & then possible deficiencies in insurance cover at events. It was agreed to pay the so-called 'HP levy' directly to the Organisers, rather than HSI as in previous years & to allow each event the discretion to give prizemoney or not. These measures satisfied the requirement for more funding but unfortunately the insurance debate rumbled on a little longer!

As the Northern Region were happy with the status quo, they kindly ran 4 Tyrellas in the lead up to Ballindenisk International, but it still left a number of riders short of MERS for this outing.

SLR had a good showing at Ballindenisk, with Ian Cassells 3rd in 4*L, Sam Watson winning the 2L and a 1,2,3 in the ponies from Maya Byrne, Anna Radford & Claire Nestor. In the short formats, we had John Tilley 2nd in 3*, Cathal Daniels 3rd in 2* & a super win for one of our rising young talents, Ciara O'Connor, in the 1*.

There were no SLR events then until after Millstreet but on the international front, Ian Cassells finished a creditable 13th on Master Point at Badminton.

Millstreet saw Robbie Kearns 2nd in the 3*L with Sorella Blue & Ben Connors 4th in this very competitive class. Robbie also won the 2*L on Belline Thistlebethelasttime. Patrick Whelan took 2nd in the 4*S on Altitu & Cathal Daniels was 3rd in the 3*S, with Ian Cassells 2nd on Rutland Flamenco in the young horse2*.

The SLR finally got under way in June with Frankfort Stud, where classes were won by James O'Haire, Mark Houlihan, Robbie Kearns & Patrick Whelan. Will Kearney did a great job providing subsequent outings in July, August & September, propping up what was a very quiet year for SLR events.

Lisgarvan International in August was its usual successful self & was blessed with great weather for the xc. Jessica Reid had a great result to finish 3rd in the 3*L & Maeve Deverell finished a close 2nd in the 2*L. The 4*S was won by Cathal Daniels on his old campaigner, Barrichello, & Robbie Kearns took 3rd in the 3*S. The competitive young horse 2* had Ian Cassells in 2nd on Peak Freestyler, with Patrick Whelan 2nd in the 1*.

Early August saw the ponies head to France for the Europeans, where we were represented by Tadhg O'Haire & Suzi Cosgrove with Sarah Smullen in reserve. Success eluded the team on this occasion but a lot of experience was gained! At the end of August, a big contingent of juniors & young riders headed to Strzegom in Poland for their Europeans. The Young Rider team had SLR members Ben Connors, Tom Nestor, Oleanna Cowan & Jack O'Haire as reserve & they finished a super 2nd with Ben Connors in individual 10th.

In Juniors, we were represented by Ciara O'Connor & Gearoid Bolger with Ben Connors & Anna Nangle in reserve. The team failed to make the podium but Ciara finished 20th overall.

Home International action returned at Ballindenisk 2, where Ciara O'Connor took a super win in the 2*L with Ashwood Rio & Tadhg O'Haire reasserted himself by taking a win in the pony 2*. Other podium finishes came from Sam Watson, 3rd on the pretty Ballybolger Goldman in the 3*S & Maeve Deverell a close 2nd, on the equally pretty Annaharvey Dunowen, in the 2*S.

The Senior Europeans in Blenheim, produced a historic silver medal win for our team with Ian Cassells on Millridge Atlantis as anchorman, proudly representing the SLR.

The National season wrapped up at the super new venue for our region at Barnadown. The EI National Championships were staged at this green field venue, where our own Will Kearney & Derek Hamilton pulled off a last minute miracle to get the event up & running. The entries were disappointing but the feeling was that, coming after Ballindenisk, it was a couple of weeks too late for a lot of

people. The weekend went well though and saw another 2 wins for Patrick Whelan in the 110 & 100 championships - he had also won the 120 championship at Millstreet in June. A clean sweep for Patrick in the horse finals was just denied by Heidi Hamilton taking the EI90 championship with Mount Atlas. Annabelle Dunne took a great win in the EI100 pony championship & has been awarded the Tiggys Trust trophy for 2025.

To round off the year, Ian Cassells had a phenomenal result at Le Lion, coming 3rd with Nuala McDonalds Noa W in the 7yr olds & going one better with Dick Murphys ultra consistent ,mare, Rutland Flamenco to take the silver medal in the 6yr olds. This helped Ian to a current world ranking of 17th, 2nd of the Irish to Austin O'Connor in 15th. In the junior rankings, Ben Connors finished the year in 1st place & is currently lying 5th in the YR rankings & Maeve Deverell is in 20th place in the juniors..

Our very hard working SLR Stewards are also figuring highly in world eventing with John & Ger Little jet setting throughout the summer, including Ger working as a steward at Aachen & being appointed for the WEG there next year, while also acting as Chief Steward for the pony & young rider Europeans in Strezegom. David Lee has been appointed to the Ground Jury for the 6yr olds in Le Lion next year & Gillian Kyle has recently been nominated by HSI for HP team selection this year – altogether a very talented & dedicated bunch of officials!

Looking forward to this year, we have 8 confirmed dates within our region, 2 in Barnadown, 2 in Frankfort, 2 in Glandoran & 1 in Lisgarvan. We have a date for Punchestown in September but it may or may not happen & could be replaced with another Frankfort.

I would like to remind everyone of the absolute necessity of your volunteering duties & explain that you will be reminded of them by our secretary Orla O'Neill & anyone reneging on their duty may be blocked by Head Office from subsequent event entries. We simply cannot run events without volunteers.

Finally, I would like to give heartfelt thanks to members of the SLR Committee who have helped so much during the year – particularly Orla but also Ger Little, Ger Crehan, Rory O'Hare , Edie & Will, who have all continued to just show up during the year!!