



PRESS RELEASE

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Team Ireland Win Seven Gold At European Lifesaving Championships

Ireland's top Lifesavers have won seven gold medals at the European Lifesaving Championships in Belgium (30 Aug – 9 Sept).

The Championships simulate real-life rescue situations that Lifeguards encounter and pits the best Lifesavers from around Europe against each other in a series of gruelling water rescue scenarios in both pool and beach environments.

Nineteen countries competed at pool events in Bruges and at beach events in Ostende. Two Irish teams secured a total of twenty-nine medals, 7 Gold; 15 Silver; 7 Bronze (see table).

“We are absolutely thrilled”, said Gold medal winner Lily Barrett, “competing against the best Lifesavers from nineteen countries is challenging to say the least but we supported each other through every event and our training has now paid dividends with twenty-nine medals in the bag.”

“These are fantastic results”, commented the Chair of Irish Water Safety's Sports Commission Clare McGrath, “every single person gave their utmost and I am very proud of them as a team and as individuals. The junior competitors will soon become Lifeguards of the future, patrolling beaches and pools in Ireland and abroad. No other sport gives so much back to a community in terms of safeguarding our population at aquatic environments. I extend my congratulations to the background staff, parents and coaches for all their preparatory work.”

See below for medal table and event descriptions.

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| RESULTS | Gold | Silver | Bronze |
|--|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Event Simulated Emergency Response Competition (SERC) Serc Senior | | Triona McMenamin David Butler Joe mooney Katie Shannon | |
| Line Throw Senior | David Butler Joe Mooney | | |
| Line Throw Jnr | | | Tim Collins Ryan Cotter |
| Oceanwoman | | | Roisin Cahill jnr Lily Barrett snr |
| Oceanwoman relay Snr | | Katie Shannon lily Barrett Hana Blake Denise Bolger | |
| Board Rescue Jnr | Roisin Cahill Amy O'Brien | Kai Wilmott Odhran Savage | |
| Board Rescue Snr | | | Triona McMenamin Lily Barrett |
| Beach Sprint relay Jnr | | Amy O'Brien Aoife Madigan Aisling Barry Emer Kelly | |
| Beach Sprint | | Denise Bolger Snr | Odhran Savage Jnr |
| Beach Flags | Emer Kelly Jnr | | |
| Board Race | Lily Barrett Snr | | |
| Surf Swim | Odhran Savage Jnr | | |

Also Finishing in top 16 -

Nathan Holding, Bill Milne, Ryan Shannon, Aoife Deane, Nicloe Devitt, Marley Haugh, Noel Shannon,

The sport of Lifesaving:

1. Life Saving Sport is recognised as an Olympic Category two Sport and it is recognised by the International Olympic Committee and the World Sports Federation.
2. The sport is controlled by International Lifesaving (ILS) Sport and this organisation is recognised by IOC as the controlling body for the sport worldwide. There are over one hundred countries registered as members of ILS.
3. Within Europe the sport is controlled by International Lifesaving Sport Europe a subsidiary body of ILS.
4. Irish Water Safety is recognised by both bodies as the National Governing Body for the sport in Ireland.
5. Irish Water Safety has organised the sport in Ireland since 1946. His Excellency President Sean T. O'Ceallaigh presented the President's Award to IWS in 1950 for competition between the counties of Ireland and it is competed for every year since then.
6. ILS, ILSE and IWS all subscribe to WADA.
7. The sport holds European and World Championships in addition to National Championships,
8. A Sports Commission manages the sport within IWS. Participation in competitions has been part funded by Irish Sports Council and IWS funding.
9. Life Saving Sport is quite distinct in that the disciplines in which people compete are directly related to elements of lifeguarding,

Event descriptions:

Manikin Relay: Four competitors in turn carry a manikin approximately 25m each.

Medley Relay: With a dive start on an acoustic signal, the first competitor swims 50m freestyle without fins.

With a dive start after the first competitor touches the wall, the second competitor swims 50m Freestyle with fins.

With a dive start after the second competitor touches the wall, the third competitor swims 50m freestyle towing a rescue tube. The third competitor touches the turning edge.

The fourth competitor is in the water wearing fins with at least one hand on the turning edge or starting block. The fourth competitor takes the harness of the rescue tube and the third competitor to a fourth competitor in the water wearing fins with at least one hand on the turning edge or starting block. The third competitor, playing the role of "victim," holds the rescue tube with both hands, while being towed 50m by the fourth competitor to the finish.

Line Throw: In this timed event, the competitor throws an unweighted line to a fellow team member located in the water located 12m distant and pulls this "victim" back to the finish edge of the pool.

Surf Race: With a running start into the surf from the start line on the beach, competitors swim around the 400m course designated by buoys, returning to shore to finish between the finish flags on the beach.

Board Race: Competitors stand on or behind the start line on the beach with their boards 1.5m apart. At the start signal, competitors enter the water, launch their boards, and paddle the course marked by buoys, return to the beach, and run to cross the finish line.

Ski Race: On the starting signal, competitors paddle their skis around the course marked by buoys and return to finish when any part of the ski crosses the in-water finish line – ridden, gripped, or carried by the competitor.

Oceanman: Competitors cover a 1200m course that includes a swim leg, a board leg, a ski leg, and a beach sprint finish.

Board Rescue: In this event, 1 member of the team swims approximately 120m to a designated buoy, signals, and waits to be picked up by the second member of the team on a board. They both paddle to shore and cross the finish line on the beach with the board.

Tube Rescue: Four competitors from each team participate in this event: a “victim,” one rescue tube swimmer, and two rescuers. The victim swims approximately 120 m to a designated buoy, signals, and waits to be rescued by the rescue tube swimmer. As they return to shore, the remaining two rescuers enter the water to assist. The event finishes when the first competitor in a team crosses the finish line while in contact with the victim.

Taplin: Teams of 4 competitors (1 swimmer, 1 board paddler, 1 surf ski paddler, and 1 runner) cover the course in a sequence of legs determined by draw at the start of each competition.

Flags: From a prone starting position on the beach, competitors rise, turn and race to obtain a baton (beach flag) buried upright in the sand approximately 20m away. Since there are always fewer batons than competitors, those who fail to obtain a baton are eliminated.

Run Swim Run: From the start line, competitors run to pass around the turning flag and enter the water to swim out to and around the buoys. Competitors swim back to the beach to again run round the turning flag before running to the finish line.

Simulated Emergency Response Competition (SERC): The Simulated Emergency Response Competition tests the initiative, judgment, knowledge, and abilities of 4 lifesavers who, acting as a team, apply lifesaving skills in a simulated emergency situation unknown to them prior to the start. This competition is judged within a 2-minute time limit. All teams respond to the identical situation and are evaluated by the same judges.