



PRESS RELEASE

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Ireland's best Lifesavers to compete in simulated pool rescues WSI Pool Lifesaving Championships, UL 50-metre pool, 17th & 18th Feb

Ireland's best lifesavers will compete in real life rescue scenarios in Water Safety Ireland's National Pool Lifesaving Championships at the University of Limerick Sports Arena this weekend, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th February. Competitors will go head-to-head in conditions that Lifesavers can encounter in real life rescue situations.

The sport of lifesaving teaches participants the skills necessary to rescue people in distress in water. Many of the competitors, having worked as Lifeguards in pools nationwide, will get their chance to pitch their skills against the finest lifesavers in the country.

The event promotes the fitness and readiness for action of the lifesavers and demonstrates Lifeguard water rescues to the public through a series of competitions based around key lifesaving skills such as swimming, towing, line-throwing and rescues using underwater manikins.

"The huge turnout for the 2024 Championships is a result of great efforts by volunteers nationwide to attract more youths into this growing sport," commented Simon McGarrigle, Water Safety Ireland's Sports Commission Chair. "Hundreds of people take part in Water Safety Ireland events in pools and open water. There's massive interest in pool Lifeguarding and lifeguarding sport plays a critical role in our efforts to bring drownings down."

The events are varied and challenging with competitors swimming under obstacles, rescuing 'casualties' from the water and skilfully testing a variety of lifesaving competences in the process. This year will feature a new Simulated Emergency Response Competition (SERC), which will test lifesavers' abilities as a team to react to a real-life simulated emergency situation they have no knowledge of before the event. The best senior team will receive the Frank O'Kelly trophy in recognition of their efforts.

"The strong turnout this year means we can look forward to a steady stream of new lifeguards for Ireland's pools and beaches in the coming years," explained Mr. McGarrigle. "Competitors acquire life-saving skills that enriches the communities in which they live and they form enduring lifelong friendships around Ireland and overseas. It's a wonderful skill to have and it's a skill that saves lives."

The championships encourage people to enrol in one of Water Safety Ireland's many courses nationwide in swimming, rescue and lifesaving skills.

ENDS

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Background information about National Pool Lifesaving Championships Events

An introductory explanation of the different events is given hereunder.

50m Manikin Carry

The competitor swims 25m freestyle and then dives to recover a submerged manikin to the surface within 5m of the pick-up line. The competitor then carries the manikin to the finish edge of the pool.

200m Obstacle Swim

Participant swims 200m freestyle during which the competitor swims under eight (8) immersed obstacles.

100m Rescue Medley

The competitor swims 50m freestyle to turn, dive, and swim underwater to a submerged manikin located at a distance of 17.5m. The competitor surfaces the manikin within the 5m pick-up line, and then carries it the remaining distance to the finish edge of the pool.

100m Manikin Carry with Fins

The competitor swims 50m freestyle wearing fins and then dives to recover a submerged manikin to the surface within 10m of the turning edge. The competitor carries the manikin to the finish.

100m Manikin Tow with Fins

The competitor swims 50m freestyle with fins and rescue tube. After touching the turning edge, the competitor fixes the rescue tube around a floating manikin, within 5m, and tows it to the finish.

200m Super Lifesaver

The competitor swims 75m freestyle and then dives to recover a submerged manikin. The competitor surfaces the manikin within 5m of the pick-up line and carries it to the turning edge. After touching the wall the competitor releases the manikin. In the water, the competitor dons fins and rescue tube and swims 50m freestyle. After touching the wall the competitor fixes the rescue tube around a floating manikin within 5m of the turning edge and tows it to touch the finish.

Line Throw

In this timed event, the competitor throws an unweighted line to a fellow team member located in the water approximately 12.5m distant and pulls this "victim" back to the poolside.

4x25m Manikin Relay

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

4x50m Medley Relay

The first competitor swims 50m freestyle without fins. The second competitor swims 50m freestyle with fins. The third competitor swims 50m freestyle pulling a rescue tube and after touching the wall, passes the harness of the rescue tube to a fourth competitor who wears fins. 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.

4x50m Obstacle Relay

Four competitors swim 50m freestyle each passing under two (2) obstacles.

4x50m Mixed Pool Lifesaver Relay

The first competitor swims 50m freestyle without fins. The second competitor swims 50m freestyle with fins and dives to retrieve a submerged manikin. The third competitor waiting in the pool carries the manikin 50m and after touching the wall, passes the manikin to a fourth competitor who wears fins and then carries the manikin 50m to the finish.

Simulated Emergency Response Competition (SERC)

The SERC tests the initiative, judgement, knowledge, and abilities of four lifesavers who act as a team. The team under the direction of a team leader – apply lifesaving skills in a simulated emergency situation unknown to them prior to the start. This competition is judged within a two-minute time limit and all teams respond to the same scenario and are evaluated by the same judges. Every effort will be made to ensure that the scenario is executed in the same manner for every team. The winning trophy is named after Donegal advocate for water safety Frank O’Kelly, who left an enduring mark on Water Safety Ireland and lifesaving in Ireland.