

## TENNIS Dundalk Tennis Club

# Tennis stars round off a great year

2011 was an enormously successful year for the junior members of Dundalk Tennis Club.

They participated in many national, provincial and open tournaments throughout the country, winning titles in singles and doubles along the way.

To complete the calendar for 2011, the National Indoor Championship was held at the David Lloyd Centre at Clonskeagh, Dublin. The main draw of 32 in each age-group U12 to U18 for boys and girls was published, Dundalk had five qualifiers with Joseph Mullen seeded 5th at U16 level.

Daniel Mullen, U12, performed well against Oisín Shaffery (5th seed) in his first round but lost 6-1, 6-0.

Neil Jones, U16, played Ulster's Fraser McFall but went down 6-1, 6-3. However, Neil can compete at this age category again in the 2012 event and he crowned 2011 by winning the Leinster Grand Prix for U14s.

This award was presented to Neil as Leinster's top U14 performer at events organised by the province's clubs. Neil won in Bettystown and was runner-up at Malahide and Greystones.

Joseph Mullen began his championship with a first round win against Daniel O'Neill (Naas) 3-6, 6-2 and 10-6 in a tie-break. In his second round he faced Waterford's Luke Maguire.

Luke had beaten Joseph in their three previous close encounters but on this occasion it was Joseph who won 6-2, 3-6 10-3. He proceeded to the quarter-final against Castleknock's Owen Kirk (3rd seed).

Here, Joseph won a very tense battle 5-7, 6-4, 12-10, again recording a first victory over this opponent. At semi-final stage Joseph bowed out of the competition to the eventual winner, David Gardiner, Cork, on a 7-5, 6-1 scoreline. This was Joseph's best performance at this annual event and it underlines his steady progress up the ranking list.

Ruth Copas, U16, defeated Aoife Stockdale in her first round, 6-2, 6-3 and next played Laura Reid (3rd seed). Although Ruth lost the first set 6-0 she fought back very well but lost the second, 6-4. This top sixteen placing is Ruth's best performance at this level.

Dylan Kresa was Dundalk's representative at U18. His first round match was against Castleknock's Richard Foley.

Unfortunately, Dylan went down 6-2, 6-0 but he has another year at this age-level and is looking forward to 2012 as it will be his last in junior competitions.

These young tennis enthusiasts are all members of Dundalk's Performance Tennis squad, coached by local man and former Irish Davis Cup star, John McGahon.

John, seeded three, was also a competitor in the Men's National Indoor Singles Championship where, after three good victories, he was defeated at semi-final stage to eventual champion, Niall Fitzgerald (Notre Dame University), 7-6, 1-6 and 10-8 in the final set championship tie breaker.

Looking towards the future, John is developing



Dundalk Tennis Club players Michael Mullen, Joseph Mullen, Dylan Kresa who took part in the 2011 National Indoor Championships recently. Also in picture is John Burlingham.

an U12 Performance Squad to maintain Dundalk's influence at the top end of Irish tennis.

There are also many opportunities for players of all ages and abilities to enjoy the game in Dundalk. If you are interested, please call into the club for information, Monday to Friday from 4pm-7pm.

You will also find more details about Dundalk tennis and badminton club on [www.dundalkcricketsclub.com](http://www.dundalkcricketsclub.com)

## Magician Mullen excels at nationals

THE weekend before Christmas was a momentous one for local tennis star Joseph Mullen as he was the sole surviving player from Dundalk to qualify for the National Matchplay held at Westwood Clontarf.

Competing in the U16 event along with his counterparts from all four provinces, Mullen was carrying the hopes of his town and his county.

In his first match Mullen was due to square off against the number one seed and current U14 National champion Matthew McClurg of Ulster.

However Mullen knew that he possessed the necessary tools to defeat his Ulster rival and

with an array of jaw-dropping shots he defeated McClurg 7/6, 6/3.

After this sensational victory Mullen was brimming with confidence. However he ended up losing a titanic battle in his quarter final match with Jonathan Lindberg 6/3, 3/6, 11/9 which was a bitter pill to swallow for the Dundalk native.

But all was not lost for Mullen as he could still claim 3rd place if he won all of his remaining matches. Mullen started his task by beating Philip Sheehan comfortably with a 6/4, 6/2 victory.

This win followed with a mesmerising 6/0, 6/1 victory over Christopher Madden-McKee of Ulster. Mullen outclassed his Ulster opponent with a dazzling display which revealed to the tennis public that Mullen is developing at a very fast rate into a feared player across the country.

Next up for Mullen was former national champion Fraser McFall also of Ulster. However McFall's lofty status could not buy him a victory as Mullen defeated him 7/5, 5/7, 10/4.

In Mullen's way of 3rd place was McClurg looking for revenge against the Dundalk star. Mullen took the opening set 6/4 and looked like he was on course to defeat his rival again but ended up losing 4/6, 6/4, 10/8.

So after 12 sets and three championship tie breaks Mullen finished in 4th place overall.

## The Chequered Flag



A Formula One blog by Stephen English  
[www.stephenenglish.ie](http://www.stephenenglish.ie)

### Reasons for optimism in 2012

IN many ways the motorsport world will be happy to close the book on 2011. While the racing was superb the year was tinged with sadness after the dangers of competing at the highest level were once more exposed.

Indeed while the deaths of Dan Wheldon and Marco Simoncelli on consecutive weekends in October dominated the end of season headlines the year started with Robert Kubica crashing his Skoda in the Ronde di Andora rally that led to the Polish star facing a year on the sidelines and a precarious future following severe injuries to his hand, arm and leg.

The year was punctuated by a frightening crash at the Le Mans 24 Hours when Allan McNish's Audi clashed with a slower car and miraculously did not land in the photographers' area. The crash showed the dangers of standing trackside at races and with speeds ever increasing this danger is only growing.

At the highest level motorsport had been blessed by not having had a fatality for a number of years but in October the sport was rocked by the death of two of its popular racers. The shock in the aftermath of the deaths of Wheldon and Simoncelli was clear to see but what was also apparent was the desire for the sport to remember its fallen stars and move on anew.

The atmosphere in the Valencia MotoGP paddock was one of remembrance but also one with which it was important for the series to show a united front and put on a good show to remember one of its rising stars.

For Indy Cars there was no such opportunity with Wheldon's crash occurring in the final race of the season. The opening race of 2012, ironically in Wheldon's adopted hometown of St Petersburg in Florida, will surely be an emotional weekend but once the engines roar into life and the season starts the Indy Car community will be able to move on.

It is sad that a year in which the racing was superb, and excitement and interest in motorsport seemed to peak once again, will always have the spectre of death and injury attached to it but arguably 2012 promises to see even better racing and to build on the excitement of last year.

### Rallying comes to the fore

The coming season is one in which rallying looks sure to feature prominently on the psyche of the motorsport fan. The World Rally Championship will start in just two weeks time with Sebastian Loeb looking to win an unbelievable ninth consecutive world title. The Frenchman's dominance of the discipline is such that he has more than double the number of wins than any driver in the history of the sport.

The 37 year old faced a stern test last year from within his Citroen team in the shape of Sebastian Ogier but even after all his success it is clear that Loeb's desire to win is as great as ever. With Ogier now racing for Volkswagen it seems that once again the only competitors to Loeb will be from Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala. The Finnish duo are both fast but have had consistency issues in the past and when facing Loeb over the course of a 13 round season it has been proven time and again that finishing rallies in the top two is the only way to compete with the Frenchman over the course of a full season. For Hirvonen the challenge is even greater because he will join Loeb at Citroen leaving Latvala to lead Ford's charge in 2012.

The inclusion of the Circuit of Ireland Rally onto the IRC calendar has been a tremendous boost to the sport in Ireland and will surely mean that this year the series will be followed in great details. The Easter even will be the third round of the championship with Rally Portugal opening proceedings at the end of February.

Last season Skoda marched to title success with the Czech manufacturer locking out the first four places in the drivers' championship. The coming season looks set to follow a similar pattern with Andreas Mikkelsen returning to defend his crown.

It will be interesting to see how Craig Been fares in the coming season. The Irishman won his first world title last year after a thrilling victory in Rally Great Britain gave him a slender title success. The coming season will see him compete in the seven round Superb 2000 WRC in a Ford Fiesta. No announcement has been made thus far as to whether he will also take part in the Circuit of Ireland but it would be a huge mistake for rally organisers not to be in contact with the highly rated youngster.

### Formula 1 looks to build on momentum

The new season also brings renewed hope to Formula 1. The racing in F1 last year featured arguably some of the most intense battles seen in decades and even though Sebastian Vettel dominated the championship his margins of victory in races were generally quite small. Even though the Red Bull was clearly the fastest car in Formula 1 last season the new season will give hope to Ferrari and McLaren.

Both teams showed they had the pace to battle with Red Bull and that only a small improvement would have allowed them to put much more pressure on their rival in the championship. With Ferrari having promised a much more radical car in the coming season it is clear that the competition at the front could feature a Raging Bull and a Prancing Horse.

That battle will also see McLaren to the fore. The Mercedes powered team had a superb season in 2011 and with Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton as motivated as ever it is clear that if the Woking squad can hit the ground running in winter testing that their development resources and ability could allow them to set the pace.

Last season McLaren erred in the initial development of their car and were off the pace in testing but, as was the case in 2009, the team found their form and developed their car better than their rivals. If they can start 2012 from a similar footing to Red Bull and Ferrari it would be unwise to underestimate their potential.

With Pirelli once again promising radical tyre compounds and constructions for the coming year it is clear that we will once again have thrilling racing at the highest level but hopefully the title battles are just as exciting.

## Ravensdale Lodge Xmas Show results

**Class 1, cross poles:** # 1 Ravensdale Lodge's Presley D. Mac Guinness 81.92 seconds, # 2 Linda Courtney's Pugsy A. Courtney Cadam 86.50 seconds, # 3 Ravensdale lodge's Darcy Katie Ann O' Hare 98.70 seconds, # 4 Kaitlyn King's Misty C. King 103.21 seconds, # 5 Ravensdale Lodge's Lyric C. Duffy 110.32 seconds, # 6 Ravensdale Lodge's Jack A. Cosgrove 113.20 seconds, # 7 Conall Mc Grath's Apache C. Mc Grath 120.91 seconds, # 8 Ravensdale Lodge's Snowdrop R. Connolly 136.85 seconds, # 9 Jason Connolly's Dino J. Connolly 146.45 seconds, # 10 Ravensdale Lodge's Womble L. Cosgrove 161.40 seconds.

**Class 2, 60cm:** # 1 Kaitlyn King's Misty K. King 73.96 seconds, # 2 Ravensdale Lodge's Presley D. Mac Guinness 73.97 seconds, # 3 Linda Courtney's Pugsy A. Courtney Cadam 83.80 seconds, # 4 Jack Jones' Bobby J. Jones 84.06 seconds, #

5 Aoife Hughes' Liffey A. Hughes 85.11 seconds, # 6 Ravensdale Lodge's Ebony C. Twohig Carter 90.18 seconds.

**Class 3, 70cm:** # 1 Sean Bird's Whisper S. Bird 81.52 seconds, # 2 Megan Hughes' Tino M. Hughes 86.06 seconds, # 3 Robert Jones' Molly R. Jones 93.43 seconds, # 4 Shannon Dollard's Mikado S. Dollard 96.84 seconds, # 5 James Griffan's Billy the Kid J. Griffin 102.82 seconds.

**Class 4, 70cm Derby:** # 1 Linda Mackin's Holly L. Mackin 72.66 seconds, # 2 Ravensdale Lodge's O' Gara M. Keane 76.21 seconds, # 3 Georgia Kirkwood's Maddy G. Kirkwood 76.33 seconds, # 4 Ronan Lennon's Sandy R. Lennon 76.90 seconds, # 5 Kerry Rafferty's Core Rambler K. Rafferty 77.54 seconds, # 6 Sophie Kinghan's Rocky S. Kinghan 79.67 seconds, # 7 Sean Bird's Whisper. Bird 78.19 seconds, # 8 Jessica Finnegan's Joy J. Finnegan 81.76 seconds, # 9 Megan Hughes' Tino M. Hughes 85.40 seconds, # 10 Linda Keogh's Posey L. Keogh 85.52 seconds

**Class 5, 80cm:** # 1 Jackie O' Brien's Miss Zupa N. O' Brien 66.26 seconds, # 2 Jordan Mc Garrell's Dolly J. Mc Garrell 72.44 seconds, # 3 Sophie Kinghan's

Rocky S. Kinghan 74.47 seconds, # 4 Linda Mackin's Holly L. Mackin 74.53 seconds, # 5 Sean Bird's Whisper S. Bird 78.18 seconds, # 6 Kelly Smyth's Sugartown K. Smyth 79.87 seconds, # 7 Alex Simpson's Humpy A. Simpson 80.03 seconds.

**Class 6, 85cm Derby:** # 1 Mary Curtis' The Hackler M. Curtis 64.13 seconds, # 2 Conor Mc Enaney's Rainbow Special C. Mc Enaney 65.45 seconds, # 3 Tommy Webb's Bella C. Webb 65.73 seconds, # 4 Hannah Rafferty's Robe Dream H. Rafferty 66.36 seconds, # 5 Nina Simpson's Millie N. Simpson 67.36 seconds, # 6 Charlotte Eakin's Bobby C. Eakin 71.85 seconds, # 7 Lucinda Kinghan's Lady L. Kinghan 78.35 seconds, # 8 Natalie Kinghan's Coco N. Kinghan 78.38 seconds, # 9 Rachel Conn's Garnfach Lynn R. Conn 79.50 seconds, # 10 Chloe Lister Tinsley's Bart C. Lister Tinsley 79.79 seconds.

**Class 7, 90cm:** # 1 Conor Mc Enaney's Felina C. Mc Enaney 69.17 seconds, # 2 Laura Cornett's Cool Blue Millie 72.53 seconds, # 3 Adam Finnegan's Allie A. Finnegan 72.67 seconds, # 4 Chloe Lister Tinsley's Bart C. Lister Tinsley 73.31 seconds, # 5 Joe Hughes' Ammo

J. Hughes 76.04 seconds, # 6 Catherine Brady's Cara C. Brady 76.04 seconds.

**Class 8, 1m:** # 1 Holly O' Flynn's Kilcooley Independence H. O' Flynn 86.90 seconds, # 2 Emma Carville's Charlie E. Carville 95.80 seconds, # 3 Amy O' Hare's Honey A. O' Hare 86.45 seconds.

**Class 9, 1.10m:** # 1 Conor Mc Enaney's Felina C. Mc Enaney 87.63 seconds, # 2 Holly O' Flynn's Kilcooley Independence 79.83 seconds, # 3 Amy O' Hare's Honey A. O' Hare 86.34 seconds.

## Kernan's Equestrian

Horse and Pony Training League Saturdays at 11am.

Mixture of showjumping and jumpcross fences started on Saturday January 7. Registered Horse and Pony League starts Sunday February 5.

Horses start at 10am with ponies at 2pm. Final takes place on Sunday April 8. Interschools League in conjunction with Hoofprints takes place on Saturday February 18. Contact James Kernan on 0868370376 for more details.