

# TWIN BOOST FOR CONNEMARA

The organisers of the Connemarathon have received two major boosts in the countdown to the event's 13th running on Sunday April 12, writes Frank Grealley.

The award-winning sports drink Oxylent became the event's official drink, as announced by the Limerick-based distributors Ambermed. Oxylent is specifically designed to stave off fatigue and cramp in long-distance work and so is a perfect fit for the Connemarathon.

In another good news story, the race has been named among the world's top four marathons by the bestselling French magazine Jogging International — huge recognition and a major boost to the event's international appeal.

Comprising of three races — half marathon, full marathon, and ultramarathon — the Connemarathon, with its dramatic mountain setting, is one of the world's most scenic runs.

Last year participants came from 28 countries. This year more than 3,000 runners and walkers are expected.

Spokeswoman Sandra O'Connor said, 'We're truly honoured to have been chosen by Jogging International as one of the four



best marathons. We have the most beautiful location here on our doorstep, our international participants love it, and the numbers already registered for next year bear this out.'

Besides its magical scenic appeal, the Connemarathon is a huge boost to the local economy.

Registration is at [www.connemarathon.com](http://www.connemarathon.com)

# Elites return to Armagh Classic

The official countdown to the Brooks International Road Race in Armagh got under way recently after details were confirmed at a special launch to celebrate the event's 25-year history, writes Frank Grealley.

Taking place on Wednesday 19 February, the iconic event is widely acknowledged as one of the best, with fierce competition among athletes vying for top spot in the men's and women's races.

Organisers say this year's event, sponsored by sports footwear specialist Brooks and supported by Armagh City and District Council, promises to be the most hotly contested for years, with a host of athletes combining national, European, world and Olympic experience pencilled in.

Last year, Nick McCormick from Morpeth AC in Northeast England won the men's 5k international in 14:11.90, the overall standard was so high that 45 runners posted under 15 minutes, and the last finisher was only 90 seconds behind the winner.

Laura Whittle from Loughborough



University won the women's 3k in 9:25.73.

This year the former European champion, and Brooks-sponsored, Mary Cullen, with a 3k best of 8:43.74, returns to lead the Irish national team, which will also include Donegal's Ann Marie McGlynn.

In the men's 5k, a revitalised US team led by Joe Stilin, who boasts a best of 13:33.13

for the distance on the Armagh track, will be up against Poland's Krystian Zalewski, the current European 3,000m steeplechase silver medallist.

The first of the 12 races scheduled starts at 6.30pm at the top of Mall East in the city centre. For the full programme see [www.armaghroadrace.com](http://www.armaghroadrace.com)

# Dwaine keeping it country

Dr Dwaine Vance is swapping his cowboy boots for a pair of Asics trainers to complete his first marathon as one of the official ambassadors for the 34th Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon.

Vance is a research and development scientist working for Radox Health, official healthcare partner of the event, and also loves country music.

Dwaine's Belfast Marathon adventure will be a fundraiser for the official charity, Marie Curie Cancer Care, who are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Belfast Hospice in 2015. Dwaine intends to record a country music single with Hot Country TV presenter Eilish O'Sullivan to raise extra money for the charity.

'I love country music and I love running, so I thought what better way to raise money for my charity than by putting the two together. My dear friend Eilish O'Sullivan will join me in a duet on the specially penned country single and we hope to have this produced before race day.'

Registration for the Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon is open until Friday April 10. [www.belfastcitymarathon.com](http://www.belfastcitymarathon.com).



# The job is Oxylent



Pictured at the announcement of Connemarathon title sponsorship were Jon Hayes of Oxylent and Sandra O'Connor event organiser.

Oxylent, the new title sponsor for the Connemarathon, is an award-winning sport supplement drink promoting energy, stamina and recovery, without the use of sugar or caffeine

Designed for health-conscious endurance athletes who need to avoid cramp and fatigue, Oxylent contains a comprehensive range of specific nutrients in their most bioavailable form, including electrolytes, vitamins, minerals, amino acids and antioxidants.

Athletes are often encouraged to consume sugary drinks, 'goos' or chews in order to maximise energy and insulin levels to fuel their run, ride or swim. Many of these can contain close to 30 grams of sugar, which research is now showing can over-stimulate the release of insulin, lactic acid, and stress hormones like cortisol, decreasing athletic performance and muscle function and slowing recovery.

Consuming sugars raises blood glucose for only 10 to 20 minutes during intense exercise before glucose levels drop below normal and cortisol and epinephrine are released, inducing cramp and headache.

Because consuming low-glycaemic carbohydrates along with good protein and fat, together with ensuring adequate micronutrients, is a better way to nourish the body with the fuel it needs, Oxylent contains no sugar, caffeine, gluten, dairy, soya, artificial sweeteners or artificial ingredients. More information at [www.oxylent.ie](http://www.oxylent.ie)

# All set for Mullingar Half



Pictured at O'Brien's Hyundai garage for the launch of the inaugural Mullingar half-marathon were Ken Whitelaw, JP O'Brien and Gerry Duffy – [www.mullingarhalfmarathon.com](http://www.mullingarhalfmarathon.com)