

WOWI celebrates 10 years of success

WINDSURFING: Ten years ago a couple of female windsurfing friends set up WOWI - Women of Windsurfing Ireland - aiming to raise the profile of women in the sport. It was also formed with the idea of introducing windsurfers to each other so that they could share the excitement and challenges of this exhilarating sport.

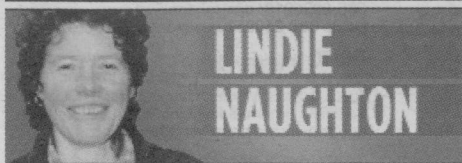
Now, to celebrate its 10th year, WOWI is holding a special gathering in Castlegregory, Co Kerry on the weekend of September 19.

Obviously, windsurfing will take centre stage but, above all, the gathering aims to be a relaxed catch-up for old friends and new. The big birthday bash takes place on Saturday night at Spillane's Pub, where a highlight will be the exhibition of photographs from WOWI's history. Details on www.wowi.ws



WATER BOYS: Gary Mawer (SLCC), Peter Egan (SLCC), Dave Francis (SLCC) and Kevin Pierse (WWKC) who won the race, in action in the Mens Senior K1 race on Leixlip lake last Saturday. Pic: Michael Feeney

SUPER KEV CROWNED KING OF THE K1 CLASS



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KEVIN PIERCE of the Wild Water club won the men's K1 title in a tightly contested National Canoe Marathon Championships hosted by Salmon Leap Canoe Club on the river Liffey at Leixlip.

A group of five paddlers had made an early break on the first lap of the 16 kilometre course. Among them were the big names of Peter Egan, Gary Mawer, Simon van Lonkhuizen and Dave Francis, as well as Pierce.

When Francis damaged his rudder and was forced to make running repairs it came down to a three-way fight for victory.

Pierce made a break on the start of the final 4km lap, and although Egan and Mawer attempted to keep up with him, the burst proved decisive. For second place, Egan just did enough to beat former Olympic sprint paddler Mawer.

PACE

Also close was the under-18 boys race, where the group that set the pace on the opening lap included Joe Murphy, Lorcan Feeley, Tom Brennan, Sean McCarthy and Adam Sweeney, all from Salmon Leap Canoe Club.

Only on the final lap did Murphy break clear after Feeley damaged his boat and had to retire. Brennan was second and Sweeney third.

Of the women, international paddler Jenny Egan had opted to race with the K1 men to get some tough competition in preparation for the forthcoming World Marathon Championships.

Over the shorter women's 8km course, the first home was Maire Diggan, with Tina Mawer second and Lizette Krol third.

Winner of the men's Divisions 3 and 4 titles over 12km was Ben Newland from the NUI Galway club, while Paul Moroney of Wild Water proved best of the veterans.

A day later the K2 boats took to the water, with Egan and Pedro Lopez coming home first after a tactical race involving four boats.

With only two kilometres to go Egan and Lopez shook off the attentions of Mawer and van Lonkhuizen with a strong sprint finish.

In third place was Dave Francis, paired with the veteran Malcolm Banks.

First of the U18 boys was the crew of Feeley and Sweeney, with Moroney and John Ringwood best of the veterans and Diggan and Caoimhe Ni Cuinn the first women's crew.

► In just 10 days' time, the 50th Liffey Descent is certain to be one of the biggest days ever in Irish canoeing.

Book your place on the side of the river now to avoid disappointment.

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