

## Fagan targets Houston for Olympic qualifying standard

Martin Fagan is targeting the Houston Marathon in Texas next January as the race where he hopes to achieve the marathon qualifying standard for both next year's World Track & Field Championships and the 2012 London Olympics.

"It would be a great relief to achieve the marathon qualifying standard as it would then give me the chance to fully concentrate my training towards the World Championships and the Olympics," Fagan told *Irish Runner*.

Now based in Flagstaff, Arizona, Fagan hasn't decided if he will put himself forward for possible selection for the European Cross Country Championships in Portugal in December. "I know that the course in Villamoura would suit me as it will be firm and fast, but I have not yet decided if the event will fit in with my racing plans for that time of year," he said.

The Mullingar athlete was speaking after producing a sparkling run to win the **Rathfarnham 5K Road Race** in a new course record of 13:54, a week after he had finished seventh in the Great North Run.

Fagan raced into an early lead in Rathfarnham and was closely tracked in the by Joe Sweeney, (DSD) and young John Travers (Donore Harriers) as the trio sped through the first mile in a blistering 4:03. Travers paid the penalty for his ambitious opening mile as Fagan and Sweeney raced ahead at the halfway stage.

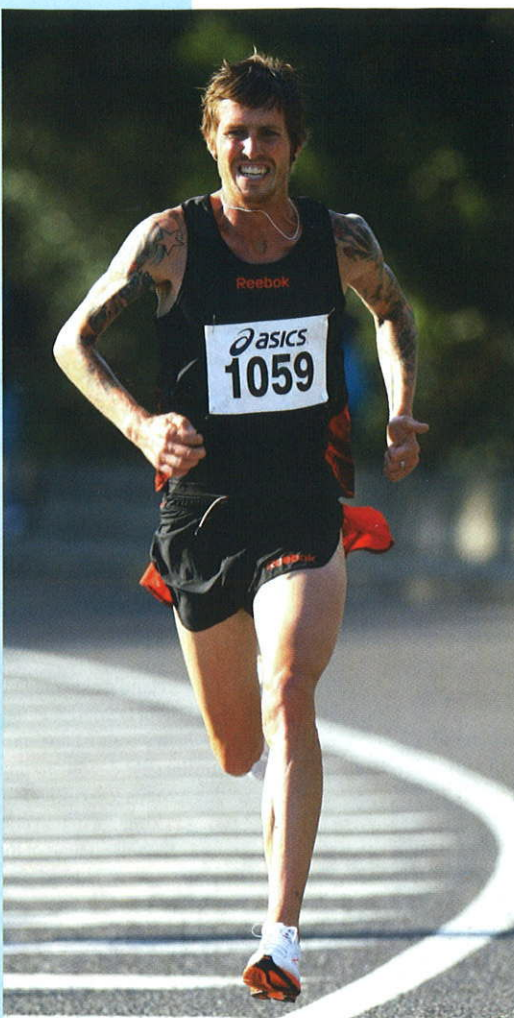
In the closing stages it was Fagan who had most left in the tank and he finished strongly to break previous course record (Robert Connolly, DSD) by two seconds. It was a good payday too for Fagan as he picked up €500 euro for his victory and a €250 bonus for setting the record.

Joe Sweeney showed great form when placing second in 14:15 while John Travers held on well to secure third, setting a junior course record of 14:18 and personal bests for the mile and the 5k in the one event.

Mary Cullen (North Sligo AC) was a clear winner of the women's race in 15:41 – a solid run by the Sligo athlete who is now back living in Dublin. Teresa McGloin (Finn Valley A.C) placed second in 16:22 and Patricia Włodarczyk (Raheny Shamrock A.C) finished third in 16:58.

"I will be gearing my training towards the European Cross Country Championships in December," said Cullen, who is due to soon link up with a new coach after spending several years under the guidance of Ray Treacy at Providence College in the USA.

This year's Rathfarnham 5K attracted a record entry of over 800 runners who enjoyed perfect racing conditions. The excellently organised event was sponsored by **Sub 4 Running Store, AIB and McCarthy Auctioneers & Estate Agents**. The race also enjoyed terrific support from the local Gardai, and the souvenir race t-shirt must qualify as one of the best we have seen at any event this year.



TOMAS GREALLY - SPORTSFILE.COM

• Martin Fagan on his way to winning this year's Rathfarnham 5K Road Race in a course record time of 13:54

## Spring into action with Croi in 2011

Irish heart disease charity Croi is now offering runners guaranteed places in marathons around the globe in 2011.

Croi have packages available in the London and Boston Marathons taking place in April. London is consistently one of the most popular marathons on the calendar and the four-night package for Boston will give runners an opportunity to complete the world's longest established marathon.

The Barcelona Half Marathon package on Valentine's weekend includes a three-night break, while weekend and daily packages are also available for the Inish-bofin Island Half Marathon on May 14.

A free trip to New York is also on offer to anyone who takes part in any of the four marathons mentioned above. For more details, contact Jeremy on **091 542 404** or email [jeremy@croi.ie](mailto:jeremy@croi.ie). Details also available on [www.croi.ie](http://www.croi.ie) or visit the Croi stand at the Dublin Marathon Expo 2010 on October 23/24.

## Rebel legend Hartnett honoured in Ballyhooly

One of Ireland's greatest-ever runners was honoured in his native Cork with the unveiling of a plaque commemorating his achievements in cross-country running and on the track.

Forty years ago, John Hartnett, from Ballyhooly near Fermoy, became the first Irishman for many decades to win an international cross-country title when he triumphed in the World Cross Country Junior race at Vichy, France.

He then gained an athletics' scholarship to Villanova University and two years later established an Irish 5,000m record of 13:43.0 and also competed in the Munich Olympics.

Under the guidance of legendary Villanova coach Jumbo Elliott, Hartnett went on to break Ronnie Delany's Irish mile record, clocking 3:54.7 in 1973, and the following year, on a memorable night at the Cork City Sports on the old Mardyke grass track, he ran the mile in 3:56.3.

During his term at Villanova he had many successes on the track, both indoors and outdoors, and teamed up with another Corkman, Donie Walsh, on the collegiate cross-country circuit.

It was therefore fitting that it was the Leevale athlete Walsh who had the honour of performing the unveiling of the plaque, which has been erected by the local community.

Hartnett now lives in Marleton, New Jersey, and celebrated his 60th birthday on June 7 last. On that day Villanova University honoured one of their most famous athletes on their website, detailing some of his most memorable achievements.



• Donie Walsh unveils the Hartnett commemorative plaque in Ballyhooly

– FRANK GREALLY

– JOHN WALSH ➔