



A-Z - SPAR EUROPEAN CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Are you trying to catch up on your athletics terms ahead of this weekend's SPAR European Cross Country Championships in Santry on Sunday? Well look no further because we have compiled an A-Z that will give you everything you need to know about cross country....and a little bit more!

A: Athletics Ireland (AI): is the governing body that will run the European Cross Country Championships this year.

A – Anaerobic Threshold: Is the transition phase between aerobic (with oxygen) and anaerobic (without oxygen) running. Good training will increase AT by teaching muscles to use oxygen more efficiently so that less lactic acid is produced.

B: Linda Byrne and Fionnuala Britton: Linda Byrne of Dundrum South Dublin Athletic Club will compete in the senior women's event, while Fionnuala Britton (Sli Chualann) took silver in the U-23 event in 2006 and was 7th in the race in 2007.

B – Bandit: A runner who competes in a race without registering, they are not eligible for prizes.

B – Bear: The point in a race when lactic acid builds up and physically changes your strides as if you were carrying a bear on your back.

B – Bonk: Like hitting the wall, this is a state of exhaustion when glycogen stores are depleted, blood glucose levels are low and the only exercise that can be performed is slow running. Normally occurs around 20 miles in the marathon.

C – Cushioning: The ability of a shoe to absorb the impact of footstrike

C – Catherina McKiernan: Won gold in the first European Cross Country Championships held in 1994 in Alnwick, United Kingdom.

C – Cardiac Creep: This happens to athletes when their heart rate increases, while they continue running at the same pace, due to dehydration.

C – Carb Loading: Dietary practice of eating high carbohydrate diet for three days leading up to the race to maximise glycogen stores.

C – Chafing: When clothing "rubs you up the wrong way" and causes redness and or blisters usually caused by wearing the wrong clothing.

C – Clydesdale: A runner that weighs above 180 pounds

D - Double Clutch: A pattern of breathing in which a runner inhales two breaths for every breath exhaled.

D – Dehydration: Not having enough fluids in the body

D - DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness): This is common in long distance athlete who usually feels the effect of a hard race 48 hours after the race in the form of muscle soreness.

E – European Athletic Association: is the European governing body for the sport of athletics.

F - Fast Twitch: Muscle fibers that determine if a runner is suited to sprints or middle / long distance running

F - Family – Brother and sister Michael and Mary Mulhare from North Laois AC will be competing for Ireland at the European Cross Country Championships

F – First time: This is Ireland’s first time to host the European cross country championships since it began in 1994.

F - Flopper: a runner who has a habit of collapsing in a non-winning position at the end of a race.

F – Fartlek: Swedish word for speedplay. It refers to interval workouts of mixed intensity i.e. a combination of fast and slow running

G – Gait: The manner by which an athlete runs or walks

G - Gebre-egziabher Gebremariam: is the 2009 world cross country championship winner. The race was run over a distance of 12km and he finished with a time of 34.02mins.

H – Hydration: Adding more fluid to the body

H - Hash House Harriers: A social club of runners that has been described as “a drinking club with a running problem”. Members called “hashers” are given colourful nicknames and the club runs are modeled after the old game of Hares and Hounds. The run begins when one or two runners, called Hares, set the trail that the other runners, Hounds, will try to follow.

I - Intervals: It is a type of workout where a set distance is run repeatedly with a recovery jog in between.

I - Intensity: Degree of effort or exertion of an exercise

I – IAAF World Cross Country Championships: is the most important race in the cross country calendar and was held in Jordan in 2009, the winner was Ethiopian athlete Gebre – egziabher Gebremariam

J - Junk Miles: Many miles run at slow pace, attributed to a training strategy by runners who confuse high mileage counts with improvement

J – John Treacy: the former Irish athlete and Olympic medalist who won the World Cross Country champions twice in 1978 and 1979.

K – Kenenisa Bekele: considered one of the greatest long distance athletes of all time. He currently holds the record of six consecutive long distance titles whilst also holding the world record and Olympic record in both 5,000metres and 10,000metres.

K – Kick: It is a finishing sprint at the end of a race.

L – Lactic Acid: A by-product of the body's use of carbohydrates; usually associated with muscle stiffness and burn after a hard workout

L – Liam Hennessy: Event Director and President of Athletics Ireland

L - Limerick: the venue when John Treacy last won the World Cross Country Championships in 1979.

L – LSD: Long slow distance. Slow distance running designed to improve endurance

M – Martin Fagan: One of Ireland's top cross country runners. He will lead the Irish men's team in Santry

M – Medals: Each medal incorporates three famous Dublin landmarks into its design, Dublin Castle, The Spire and the Ha'Penny Bridge.

N - Negative Split: This is running the second half of a race faster than the first, common with elite runners.

N – Nationalities: 474 athletes from 32 different countries are expected to participate in the race

O - Oxygen Debt: A state where the energy demand is greater than what can be provided by oxygen thus inducing heavy breathing to consume more oxygen

O - Overtraining – Condition where a runner trains too much too soon and leads to fatigue, injury and/or burnout

O - Outsole: It is the material, usually made of hard carbon rubber found on the sole of most running shoes.

P – Pedometer: is a device you can use to check how many steps you have taken during a training session

P – Paralympian: Irish paralympian Michael McKillop will be competing on the Irish team in Santry. The 2008 paralympic gold medalist in the 800m will compete for the Irish junior team following his stunning victory at the Inter County event in Kilbeggan.

P - Participants: 474 athletes are expected to participate in the race

Q – Qualify: To guarantee qualification for the Irish team for the European Cross Country Championships, athletes had to finish in the top three positions in men's and women's senior, junior and U-23 races at the Inter County Cross Country Championships in Kilbeggan last month.

R – Paula Radcliffe: The current women's world record marathon holder has previously won the world cross country championships on two occasions the last of them in Dublin in 2002.

R – Rabbit: The name given to an athlete who sets the pace for the a group during the race and then drops out before the final laps commence.

R – Runners Knee: Knee pain usually caused by the knee cap not sliding properly during movement while running

R - RICE: An acronym for Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation, a procedure used to treat certain injuries

R - Runners High: Feeling of euphoria some runners feel after a long, hard run or race, apparently related to the secretion of endorphins

R - Running Economy: This refers to how much oxygen you use when you run. When you improve your economy you are able to run at a smaller percentage of oxygen utilization.

S – SPAR: The sponsors of the European Cross Country Championships

S - Sonia O Sullivan: Ireland's most successful female athlete of all time. She won gold in the World Cross Country Championship on two occasions. Her crowning achievement was a gold medal in the 1995 World Athletics Championship. She also boasts three European Championship gold medals. Along with Catherina McKiernan, she holds the role of ambassador for the Spar European Cross Country Championships 2010.

S - Second Wind: Feeling of more energy and less effort some athletes feel after 15-20 minutes of running

S - Stamina: The ability to combine speed and endurance

S - Splits: Refers to your times at mile markers or other pre-planned checkpoints along the way to the finish line.

S – Spikes: the name given to the shoe worn by athletes during a race.

S – Singlet: The light tank top worn by runners

T – Time: Last years winner Serhiy Lebid ran 10km in a time of 30.49mins. The 2008 women's gold medalist Hilda Kibet ran 8km in a time of 27.45mins.

T – Tempo: A workout performed at lactate threshold pace

U – Ukraine: The birth place of current European Cross Country Champion Serhiy Lebid. He has won the race on eight occasions, the last of which was in Brussels in 2008 and he will be hoping for a ninth title win in Santry in December.

V – Volunteers: Athletic Ireland has 270 clubs and 26,000 juvenile and senior members many of which will volunteer on race day in order for the meeting to be a success.

V - Veteran – A term similar to “Master” where male athletes become “veterans” at 40 years of age and women athletes at 35 years of age

V – Venue: The track is located Santry, Dublin on the North side of the city. It is adjacent to the national track and field stadium

V - VO2 Max – The maximum amount of oxygen your body can use, the higher the Vo2 max level the better the performance

W- Women's Champion: The current women's cross country champion is Hilda Kibet, a Dutch runner of Kenyan birth but she will not be competing at Santry.

W - WADA: World Anti-Doping Agency: is the international independent organisation created in 1999 to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against doping in sport in all forms. Representative of WADA will be in attendance at the meeting in Santry to monitor athletes before, during and after the race.

X – X-Rays: Athletics Ireland will arrange a lot these per year for their cross country athletes. With middle / long distance running, athletes are particularly susceptible to stress fractures especially as they run 90 to 130 miles per week.

Y – Yugoslavia: 9 men and 6 women who will be competing from their respective nations that were formerly part of the country of Yugoslavia.

Z – Zone / In the Zone: The mental state of readiness and focus that many athletes claim to be in leading up to and just before a race begins.