

Anthony Forristal, a junior member of Thomastown Paddlers Canoe Club, returned from a successful trip to Italy on Monday. He was competing as part of a junior development Irish team. The race was an International Canoe Federation sprint regatta held in Auronzo di Cadore in the Italian Alps. This was one of a series of international events organised by the International Canoe Federation. Eight other countries took part in this event, which involved competitors racing over distances of 200 metres, 500 metres and 1000 metres. Sprint racing is held on flat water and the participants use extremely fast and unstable racing kayaks.

For this event, Anthony teamed up with Iomhar MacGiolla Phadraig, a fellow paddler from the Salmon Leap Canoe Club in Leixlip. For the last number of weeks, the two paddlers have been training extremely hard for this event as the standard is exceptionally high. Training involves both water sessions in their racing kayaks combined with gym and running sessions. At the event, the boys contested all three race distances. In the 200 metre distance, the boys failed to get out of their heat but they were not unduly worried as the longer distances were where their strength lies. In the 500 metre distance, the boys progressed out of the heat and narrowly missed a place in the final following an extremely competitive semi- final. In the 1000 metre category, the boys progressed through the heats and the semi finals and were happy with a fine eighth place in the final. They were very happy with this result and it showed that their training has paid off over the last few weeks.

Next up for Anthony is the European Marathon Championships which takes place in just over two weeks time in Dijon in France. Tony now has to switch the focus of his training from sprint distances, to preparing himself for distances of over 20 kilometres. For this event he will return to racing in his single racing kayak. Forristal will also have a third and final trip abroad this year, when he will travel to Spain, also in July, to compete as part of a four man sprint team in another sprint regatta. This has been a great year for Anthony, as he will have represented the country no less than three times by summer's end. We wish him well on his upcoming trips.

If you would like to try canoeing, why not sign up for one of our beginner courses? All information and contact numbers can be found on www.thomastownpaddlers.com