



The first ever **kettlebell sports** competition in **Ireland** was held in **Kilkenny** city on the 24th July. This was hosted by Kilkenny kettlebell club, run by head coaches Mark Stapleton and Eddie Sheehan. The event was the traditional biathlon jerk and snatch, and to end of the day a strongman(32kg-36kg-40kg-44kg-48kg-56kg), strongwoman(20kg-24kg) this event was more for the public to try promote the sport and for everyone to have some fun at the end of a long day.

Ireland is still very new to kettlebell sports and because of this the competition was set up to try accommodate beginner level lifters, men used weights from 12kg-28kg and women from 8kg-16kg.

Competing was new for most athletes, the only ones who had competed before were athletes from Kilkenny kettlebell club and Hells Kettlebells, so we did our best to explain the rules to all athletes and we tried to make the judging fair.

There were 44 athletes on the day, and many spectators. People came from all over Ireland and we had a group travel over from Walsley, UK. (Hells Kettlebells).

The quality of lifting varied but most athletes completed the full 10min jerks and snatches. Many big numbers were put up but it should be remembered that most males were using 16-20kg's and so still more work needs to be done in Ireland to raise the level of Giverk sport. Mark Stapleton and Eddie Sheehan were the only athletes to use the 28kg and as head coaches of Kilkenny kettlebell club, have tried to set a standard from which other clubs and coaches can work towards. Mark and Eddie will be competing in Berlin in September, Wales in October and then in Italy in November with 32kg's.

The sport side of kettlebells is sure to grow rapidly now, every gym in Ireland has sets of kettlebells, but most people only do kettlebell workouts and many have never even heard of the sport, Ireland up until now has only had a representative not an athlete attending some events held by the (IKUL) but nobody who competes and nobody who has actually trained up athletes correctly for GS. And nobody has promoted kettlebell sports in Ireland. This is no more, Ireland can be proud to say that on the 24th July the best of Ireland lifters got together and this is the start of kettlebell sports in our country.

Due to the lack of qualified coaches in Ireland, it may be sometime still before we see many Irish athletes on the international scene. But for now Eddie Sheehan and Mark Stapleton will be setting up a team to start competing at international events. We may not hit the big numbers yet and at the moment Mark and Eddie are the only athletes that can compete with the heavier weights (28kg and 32kg), But due to the great coaching abilities of their coach Gregor Sobocan from Slovenian kettlebell club, Mark and Eddie have progressed quickly and so have their athletes, which could be seen at the competition with over half the competitors coming from Kilkenny kettlebell club which is the biggest kettlebell sports club in Ireland.

We hope that the kettlebell community supports us and our athletes, we have a huge hunger for the sport, and we have the desire and the heart.

If anyone would like more information on the Irish kettlebell team please contact us via website www.kilkennykettlebellclub.com