**Rowing**

* **How you got into it**

When I was young I did a few different sports like Swimming, Hurling even a bit of rugby but was never really any good at them or got much enjoyment out of them. My brother, Colm, started rowing at 14 or 15 and he got hooked very quickly so as soon as I was old enough, I had to give it a go. The club in Carlow is one of the oldest rowing clubs in the country at over 160 years old and is right in the middle of town so everyone around knows somebody that was in the club over the years. There is a great family feel to it and I have friends for life out of it.

* **Training**

Rowing training has a lot of similarities to Running – A lot of steady long distance to build up your aerobic base and then the speedwork builds up as you get into racing season. We also do a good bit of weights, both upper and lower body to build strength. The hours involved are very high, in order to be competitive, you really need to be doing at least 10-12 sessions a week. Dependent on the time of year its probably 2-3 weights sessions, 4 or more sessions on the water and the rest on the rowing machine or some kind of cross training.

* **Racing**

The racing season runs from April to mid-July which is quite short despite the fact that you are training almost all year round. There are some long-distance time trials during the winter to keep you sane, but they are generally pretty cold and miserable and not worthwhile! The standard summer racing distance is 2,000m. This will take 7 – 8 minutes in the single scull depending on the person and the weather but in the big boats like the 4’s and 8’s it could be under 6 minutes.

* **Benefit to running**

I think the strength brought from rowing is very helpful for running. When you hit a hill after a few miles of a race you’d be glad of the weight training. Also, despite the races generally being shorter than running, the long slow distance work gives you the aerobic base to keep going at a high intensity for the longer races.

**Running**

When I was young, I was always one of the lightest lads in the group meaning whenever we did running for training I was faster than anybody else so I enjoyed it. I did a little bit of cross country with the school and did alright, so I had the interest. I always wanted to do a marathon too so in 2018 I decided to sign up for Dublin. Once the rowing finished that year in July, I started doing a bit and finished in 3:01. I was hoping to break 3 but I was happy enough in the end. I met Tim through work, and he suggested coming down for a few sessions so I gave it go. I had intended to go back to rowing at some point but I am still here for the moment!

**Favorite Session**

The hill session in Welshtown is a great session. Its very tough and if you go too hard in the first few reps you will pay dearly for it later on. It’s very satisfying finishing the last set just when your legs decide that they don’t work anymore.

**Preferred Distance**

I don’t really have one yet – I think the 5k suits me as its short and sweet, similar to rowing. I did a few 10 milers last year and liked that too so I am not fussy.

**The Club**

I think it’s a great group, there’s no room for egos or any bullshit. Everybody just wants to train hard and improve but equally people are really happy to help everybody along. Coming from rowing which is extremely team orientated, running could be a very lonely sport but the atmosphere in the club doesn’t allow that. Its also great that groups are split based on speed and ability, not on age or grade or gender. You could have novice men training with senior men or women or juniors, it doesn’t matter, everyone is there to get the best out of each other.

**Improvement**

Running with a group is definitely key – There is easily 4 or 5 seconds per interval if you are trying to stay with the pack. And a bit of advice from the more experienced people is great – Everyone in the club is so willing to offer it too!

**Goals**

Hopefully set a few PB’s on the road early in the year. Id like to go under 58 for the 10 mile and see what I can do over 10k aswell. I have signed up for Dublin Marathon in October – That’s not a definite yet but I would really like to do it and to get under 3 hours. I missed the start of the cross-country season this year so it would be good to have a better go at that next year

**Back in the Boat?**

I wouldn’t rule out going back to rowing by any means but I definitely feel I have more to come in running so I’ll be sticking to the roads for the moment. If anything, I think I’d be more likely to try a bit of Triathlon rather than go back to it, but you never know, my mind changes every week.

**Can we learn anything from Rowing Training?**

One thing that comes to mind is video work – Our coaches would often take videos for us to watch back after to look at technique. If nothing else, it might encourage lads to tuck in their elbows around the bends at Market Green! Perosnally, I never really think about my running form but there are proably gains to be made there.

The strength and core training too, I don’t think we do enough of that in running. I think it is very easy to get caught up in having to do X miles per week but giving that time to build strength could be more beneficial than an extra hour pounding the road.

Saturdays and Sundays were the big training days in Rowing because you had more time than normal so we would do 2 sessions in the morning both days. It might be the equivalent of doing an interval session, taking a break for 30-40 mins and heading out for an 8 or 10 mile steady afterwards. You’d be goosed for the day but what else would you be doing on a Saturday morning? This approach can be helpful as it allows you to take a rest day during the week but still clock the same miles.

**Vapourflys – would you?**

I am on the fence on this – I think if you buy a pair and you’re getting excited about a 10 second PB then you are only codding yourself but equally if you are near the top end of a road race and everyone around is wearing them except you then you are putting yourself at a serious disadvantage. While I don’t agree with it in principle, until they are actually banned, nobody is breaking any rules. And I can’t see them being banned either because its very difficult to write a rule that restricts them – How do you quantify a mechanical advantage of one shoe over another?

**Outside of Running**

I like music and I used to play Bass Guitar in a band – We supported Jedward at a gig one time, I really don’t know if I should have told you that…