

ACHILL

HALF MARATHON

To register visit www.achillmarathon.com



SATURDAY, JULY 2

Helping to get you over that finish line

ANTON MCNULTY

IT is the phrase all long distance runners hate to hear, especially when it is about themselves; 'he's hit the wall'. With the body getting drained of its energy, you start getting doubts that you can finish and all of a sudden your brain tells you enough is enough and like the flick of a switch you stop in the middle of the race and say 'to hell with this'.

'Hitting the wall' is caused by the depletion of glycogen stores in the muscles which manifests itself by sudden fatigue and loss of energy. The condition can be avoided by eating or drinking carbohydrate-rich substances but the decision to suddenly quit largely comes from the mind which can be harder to overcome.

To help runners overcome their challenges ahead of this year's Achill Half-Marathon a workshop on improving your performances and removing your doubts will take place in Keel Community Hall on the eve of the race.

Health and Life Coach, Ute Klinger will be performing the workshop on Friday, July 1 from 7pm to 10pm and aims to show the runners how to maximise their performance.

"Real success comes from the awareness and the experience of capability, from letting go of your doubts and from orientat-



▲ **THE HOLY GRAIL** Last year's winner of the Achill Half Marathon Martin Lyons crosses the finish line. Organisers of the race will be doing everything in their power to ensure all participants get to finish the race. Pic: Brian Farrell

ing on the target. In any case, your mind is full of chatter and can hardly stop thinking.

"With EFT you can switch off your thoughts, your self doubts, your fear of failure, putting yourself under pressure and whatever emotionally stops you being successful," the German born EFT Practitioner said.

The workshop on Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) will be one of many events taking place over the Achill Half-Marathon weekend for both the runners and the general public

to enjoy. A number of activities to enjoy in the tented village to interest runners, their families, guests and supporters.

The Road Safety Authority will demonstrate their roadshow shuttle on the day and invite the visitors to take part in their demonstrations which aims to highlight road safety. As well as the shuttle which will have interactive simulators to test your driving skills, there will also be an Audi A4 fitted to a hydraulic platform which can simulate a 90-degree and 180-degree

roll-over.

Elvery Sports will also have a demo to help athletes and non-athletes ensure they are wearing the proper footwear to ensure they can perform to a high performance. Athletics Ireland and McDonalds will also have an agility tester for younger runners which is aimed at getting young people interested in running and sports in general.

The tented village will also be catering for people who are looking for some pampering and TLC with holistic therapy and reflexology available to help those get over any aches and pains. The unique double-decker 'bia bus' will also be on site to ensure nobody goes hungry on the day.

Helen Applegarth, Race Director for the Achill Half-Marathon, said the organisers wanted to ensure the race day was a fun day not just for the runners but for all their supporters and people visiting the island.

"The runners always bring a number of family and friends with them to support them and we wanted to ensure that they are entertained and enjoy themselves as well. It is important that people on the day enjoy themselves and it is a great day out for everyone," she said.

More information on the activities surrounding the Achill Half Marathon can be found on the website, www.achillmarathon.com

Hamstring strain to test fitness for big race

ANTON MCNULTY
NEWS REPORTER



THE last time I wrote in this section, I was all set to get into the training routine and was determined to get into the best shape I could for the Half-Marathon. Sadly a day on the bog footing turf has put paid to those intentions.

I woke up the morning after being on the bog, barely able to move as the back of my legs had seized up. After a few days without much comfort, I decided to go to a physio who told me I had strained my hamstrings and just for good measure it was connected to a back injury.

Three weeks of physio, intensive stretching of the hamstring and back muscles along with sessions in the pool followed

before I was able to get back training. Feeling a lot better I decided to test out the hammer and while it just about stood up to inspection, I can't say the same thing about my fitness.

The lungs were burning, the sweat was pouring off me and the slightest hills felt like going up Everest. Any fitness I had was now shot to hell and the pressure is now on.

There are less than four weeks

left until race day and the big battle between now and July 2 is to get as fit as I can without damaging more muscles in the process. However I am determined to carry on unlike some of my Mayo News colleagues who are coming up with more excuses to pull out that would put the Irish football team to shame.

My advice to anyone in training is to keep away from the bog until now and July 4.

ACHILL'S TOP ATTRACTIONS

Festivals for all the family

THE Achill Half-Marathon is only one of many annual events which take place on Achill Island, including a number of family-friendly festivals.

Three walking festivals were scheduled for 2011, two of which have already taken place - over Valentine's weekend and the May Bank Holiday weekend - and were very successful. The third takes place from August 26 to 29. A choice of walks is offered for all abilities.

A new initiative offered in 2011 is the "Give It A Go Weekend", for the visitor who has often said they'd love to give something new and different a try. All the activity providers on the island are offering taster sessions of their activities free of charge over the weekend of June 18 and 19, and further details can be found on www.achilltourism.com.

Following on from the excitement of the Achill Half-Marathon on July 2, Féile Bia Na Mara/Achill's Seafood Festival takes place from July 14 to 17. This festival celebrates Achill's maritime culture with a full programme of events suitable for all the family. This year's guest celebrity chef is Ross Lewis, from Chapter One Restaurant, one of only six Michelin-starred chefs in Ireland.

Among the highlights of this



▲ **FISH GLORIOUS FISH** Achill's Féile Bia na Mara takes place from July 14 to 17.

popular weekend are the Gala Seafood Buffet, Seaweed Safari, Cookery Demonstrations, Achill's Got Talent and Buachail and Cailín Óg Competitions. All details are available on www.feilebianamara.com

For those interested in celebrating Irish culture and language, or in learning to play an instrument, Scoil Acla Summer School from July 25 to 31 is the place to be.

The Heinrich Boll Association celebrates the life of the Nobel Prize-winning author with an Annual Arts and Cultural weekend held over the May Bank holiday, while the Achill Yawl Festival takes place every weekend from June to the end of August.

For queries on any of the above, please contact the Achill Tourism office on 098 20705.

REGISTERING FOR HALF-MARATHON

THE sixth Achill Half-Marathon gets under way on July 2 with the race starting at 11am near Keelbeach. This year the number of entrants is limited to 2,500 and there will be no late entrants taken on the day.

Registering for the race is simple. Log into the Achill Half Marathon website, www.achillmarathon.com and click on the

'Register for Race' icon. To register online you need to register as a member first and then you can pay your registration fee through our Paypal system.

You do not need a paypal account to register online - you can pay also through your credit card. The total cost of this registration will be €60 per entrant.

TRAINING TIP MAKE IT ENJOYABLE

The real beauty about running is it can be enjoyed as an individual or team sport. For those needing lots of head space from a busy working/family life, heading out on your own for a run constitutes perfect therapy. Less independent types can sign up at the gym or join the local running group.

