

Maeve Gallagher Going for Gold

Pharmacy student Maeve talks about juggling pharmacy with her elite Triathlon achievements

International Triathlete Maeve Gallagher wears many hats. Not only is she a member of the Triathlon Ireland Elite Squad, she is also studying to join the world of pharmacy.



“I love a challenge and there is no better one than trying to study a demanding course along with training for three sports. I am very lucky that I was awarded a Quercus Sports Scholarship from UCC and the support and assistance I have received from this scholarship has been vital in helping me balance my studies and sporting demands.”

Mayo's Maeve Gallagher, Pharmacy Student and international Triathlete

19 year-old Maeve, who hails from Mayo, has always had a keen interest in the field of pharmacy. She explains, “From a young age I always had an interest in Pharmacy. I was a kind, caring child and I remember setting up my own outdoor plant pharmacy at the age of 7. I was selling dock leaf ointments and plasters to my brothers who destroyed their legs from messing around outside!”

“This interest grew during my transition year work experience in secondary school, I spent time with Gary Smyth in Heneghan's Pharmacy in Kiltimagh and with Nuala and Ian Johnson in Total Health Pharmacy Swinford.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my two work placements and I loved seeing the attention to detail required and how each pharmacist carefully advised every customer, it was a community helping each other at its best.”

And it seems pharmacy and athleticism runs in the family. Maeve adds, “My cousin, Sinead Jennings, who is an Olympian, qualified pharmacist and doctor, has been a role model for me in both sport and academic terms. I achieved the points to gain entry to the MSc Pharmacy programme in UCC and I have just finished my first year and I have really enjoyed the course content so far.”

Maeve credits a strong work ethic, created by her parents who emphasised the importance of hard work from a young age, for her ability to juggle so much.

“I love a challenge and there is no better one than trying to study a demanding course along with training for three sports,” she says. “I am very lucky that I was awarded a Quercus Sports Scholarship from UCC and the support and assistance I have received from this scholarship has been vital in helping me balance my studies and sporting demands.”

In tandem with her passion for pharmacy, Maeve's love of sport also began from an early age. She adds, “I have always been incredibly involved in sport and started off playing both Gaelic football and soccer for Mayo when I was younger. I joined my local athletics club age 5 and I fell in love with the sport straight away.

“I took part in the Community Games from U6 up to U16 winning some of my first National medals. I loved racing cross country and 1500m track races where I picked up numerous All-Ireland titles, out of a pure love for the sport. In secondary school I joined my local swimming and cycling clubs in Castlebar and discovered the sport of triathlons.”

Representing Ireland

Aged just 18, Maeve achieved something special by representing Ireland in 3 separate European Championships in Cycling, Triathlon and Cross country running. Now at the age of 19, she has 24 National titles in cycling, athletics, and triathlon.

She continues, “When I started triathlons at 12, I continued to train and get better with age. I was part of the Triathlon Ireland emerging talent programme and at 16 I was selected to become a member of the High-Performance squad after competing in local triathlons in Ireland. This allowed me to go to international competitions for Ireland.

“My first European cup was in Portugal in 2017, age 16 and it was amazing. In 2018 I won my first European Medal in a Triathlon Cup in Romania placing second.”

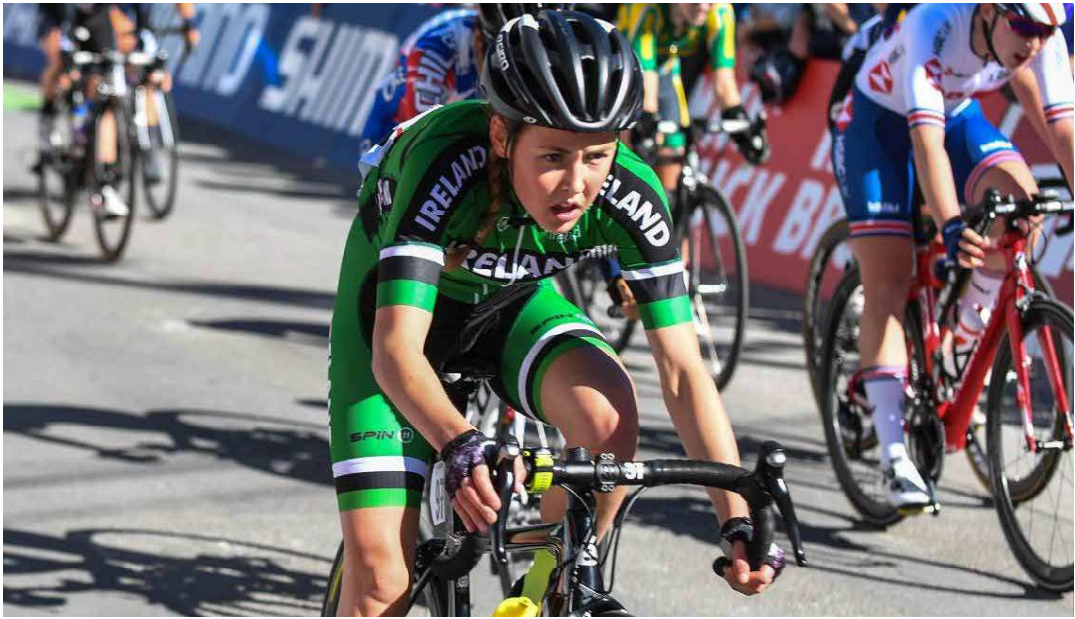
“I managed one better in 2019 by winning my first Elite Triathlon Race in Dakar in Senegal. I have amazing memories from travelling to races in places such as South Africa, Greece, Estonia and Russia with team Ireland and also competing in the Tokyo Olympics test event in 2019 as part of the mixed team relay.”

It is her goal, she says, to represent Ireland at the Olympics. “My sights are set on Paris 2024. At the moment I am focused on continuing representing Ireland in various World and European Cup races.”

At the time of talking to *Irish Pharmacy News*, Maeve was in Austria where she raced in the 2021 European Triathlon Championship having achieved 22nd in U23 category.

Pharmacist Kevin Kelly and the team from Kelly's Pharmacy, Carlow





Maeve Gallagher, focused on the future

“I really believe this is a truly rewarding career path to follow and the world of pharmacy is changing at present. Since the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccines in the local pharmacy stores I believe more day-to-day medical treatments can be offered within the pharmacy setting”

Focusing on the Future

Like every career there are going to be challenges for pharmacy. “The speed at which new technology, methodologies and pharmaceuticals are being discovered, are just some of these,” Maeve reflects.

However she adds, “I really believe this is a truly rewarding career path to follow and the world of

pharmacy is changing at present. Since the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccines in the local pharmacy stores I believe more day-to-day medical treatments can be offered within the pharmacy setting.

“I like the introduction of the consulting room within the pharmacy, and I would love to see more opportunities opened

up like this that allows a customer to speak in confidence with the pharmacist. I would also love to see more pharmacies specialise in different areas.

“As I am very passionate about sport, I teamed up with Kevin Kelly’s Pharmacy in Carlow who are Ireland’s No.1 sports pharmacy, and I am a brand ambassador for the Sponser Sports nutritional products which the pharmacy provides. Kevin has been exceptional in advising me on different Sponser products to use, focusing on recovery, energy providing and overall health and vitality. It has been a pleasure working with them and I highly recommend visiting Kevin Kelly’s to get professional advice on suitable nutritional supplements tailored to each individual’s needs.”

Pharmacist Kevin adds, “We are delighted to have Maeve as our Brand Ambassador for Sponser Sports Drinks and to assist her with our expertise and with our Sponser Sports Drinks. Maeve is a star in Irish Triathlon and is very highly rated by Sponser Sports Drinks (Switzerland) whose Brand Ambassador is Nicola Spirig (World Champion Triathlete). Maeve is wonderful ambassador for Irish Sport, The Pharmacy Profession and a wonderful Role Model for young girls especially. Kevin is very proud that this Swiss company

(Sponser Sports Food) continues to support Irish Dairy Farmers close to U.C.C. where Maeve studies. They use Irish Whey produced in Carbery, Co. Cork as the main ingredient in their Pro Recovery Product Range. Kevin looks forward to Maeve qualifying as a Pharmacist as she has promised to locum for all of his holidays. Maeve is a upcoming star in Irish Triathlon and highly rated by Sponser Sports Drink (Switzerland) who have Nicola Spirig [World Champion Triathlete] as their Brand Ambassador.

“Equally important, we are delighted that Sponser Sports Drinks continues to support Irish Dairy Farmers by using Irish Whey as their main ingredient in their Pro Recovery Products range. Maeve has promised to do all my holiday cover for the next number of years!”

With the athletics and pharmacy world very much at her feet, where does Maeve see herself in five years? “I hope to be qualified with my Pharmacy degree and to be a full-time professional athlete representing Ireland at International races,” she tells us.

“I would also like to be an advocate for younger girls allowing them to realise that if they work hard and pursue what they love they can achieve both in the sporting and academic world.”



Kelly’s Pharmacy, Carlow