

Paddy's The Chilblain 'House of Unger'

It was dang cold during the pre-dawn hours when the first wave of volunteers arrived for the 14th running of Paddy's Shillelagh Shuffle on Oct. 18. How cold? We'll say below freezing as it was sunny and 34° when NER Central arrived at 8:00 am and set up one of 40 vendor tents, positioned between title sponsor New Balance and Marathon Sports—and the only one selling discounted NER cotton/poly blend gloves to the shivering masses. Ka-ching!

Things warmed slightly for the 11:30 am certified 3M Grand Finale to NER Pub Series XVIII. Round about 11 minutes later if you looked up Elm St. it was déjà vu all over again as defending Pub Series and Paddy's champ TJ Unger appeared solo in this year's upgraded maillot jeune.

Unger took a hard right on Webster St., then left to Border Street and West Newton's industrial Champs-Élysées to the finish and a final clocking of 15:12. Former UMass-Boston and current Greater Boston TC young gun Xhulio Uruci, 22, tried to disrupt the malt & hops flow with some aggressive frontrunning and was obviously in it to win it...but, in the end, was on the shoulder of 2013 Pub champ Lee Danforth, a former 800m man, and we'd all seen this before—a vicious finishing kick and the silver went to Danforth in 15:18 with Uruci 2-ticks back.

Somerville RR strongman Greg Picklesimer, 49, retained his Pub Series runner-up position in 15:32 with former Paddy's champ Shawn Wallace, 34, of Waltham, rounding out the top-5 in 15:37.

Lincoln's Ginger Reiner, 38, tallied 299 points in this year's Pub Series—one short of perfect. Paddy's was no exception as she won handily in 17:28. Waltham HS lacrosse, track and cross country standout Taylor Pinzone, 16, was next across the line and the only athlete to better a course record—her own 19-under mark set last year and eclipsed by 10 seconds in this go-round as Taylor logged in at 18:13. (Whirlaway's Jan Holmquist, 71—who set 5 US W70 records and one W70 world record this season, could *not* break the W70 course record here despite running 21:36...basically because she had run 21:08 here last year at age 70.)

The next 6-slots after Taylor Pizzone went to Pub starlets led by top Master Holly Madden, 49, in 18:30. Pub co-champ (2014) Amanda Watters, 35, of the BAA, arrived next in 18:56 with Whirlaway's Katrina Martyn, 23, closing out 5th in 19:09. Katrina is the daughter of Doug Martyn, 53, the top Senior and 8th overall in 16:05. The Pub parade continued with SRR's Deb Downs, HFC's Eileen Cakouris, and CSU's Elizabeth Utz filling the 6-7-8 positions.

While Irish step dancers kicked their way up Elm St., merriment filled the post-race air. Pub

Series title sponsor New Balance provided shoes and merchandise for awards with the traditional shillelaghs presented to overall winners Unger and Reiner. Paddy's publicans John and Karl O'Hara were both presented with paintings of their Goose Rocks, ME vacation cottages by noted Maine artist Will Cunha (visit his galley in downtown Kennebunk).

Between Paddy's and the outside Blocktoberfest, 16 kegs bit the dust, 2400 hot dogs and 1100 cups of chicken pie were consumed along with 800 pieces of artery clearing fried dough. Of the

2,207 entrants, 1,842 managed to show up and finish with an additional 212 kids running in the Youth 1K held in the park at the top of the block.

When all was tallied, Paddy's RD Mark Kelly reported that \$50,000 had been raised for the race beneficiary—Newton Athletes Unlimited—adding, “Next year is the 15th anniversary of the race so we'll be planning a grand celebration.”

—*Bob Fitzgerald*