



Longford Sports Partnership

#WomenInSportTIRE



Sports Profile

#LongfordSportsWomen



Carmel Leahy

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We caught up with Carmel Leahy to chat about her involvement in Longford sports over the years. Carmel was born here in Longford and took part in sport through her school years. She was a swimmer and played basketball. Carmel tells us she finished swimming around 17 years old and prior to that had taken part in school competitions, community games and was a member of the Annals Swimming Club where her dad coached. After she left school, she did not take much part in sport.

When Carmel married in 1988, she returned to Longford to live. She then decided to go back to basketball and was with Falcons Basketball Club for a few years. In 1999 she got involved with Longford Swimming Club where she became a swimming teacher. Carmel coached with the swimming club until she retired last year after 20 years. Carmel says they were some of the most enjoyable years for her and she now really misses the kids, she enjoyed watching the kids grow into the sport both from a competitive point of view and from a social aspect. In 2014 Carmel got involved in the first Swim Ireland mile event and got back into the pool after many years and has been back swimming since then. Carmel recently joined Longford Triathlon Club for winter training and hopes to do sea lessons this year, but says she is really a really a pool baby. When Carmel's daughter was growing up she managed her basketball team from U10 to U18 with Longford Falcons.

About four years ago Carmel joined the late Donal Considine Cycling Group and now she says she is hooked. Carmel tells us she cycles two evenings a week and on a Sunday morning with the group which she really enjoys and that last summer was amazing as she conquered hills on the bike. This gave her a great insight into starting up a new sport from a beginner's point of view and helped her realize you really can do anything at any age. Carmel was 54 at the time and it was made easier to do as her children had left home. In recent years Carmel joined the Longford Sports Partnership Women on Water Kayak programme which she says was also a brilliant event.

During Covid in particular Carmel realized how much sport played a part in minding her mental health and how much she relied on it to get rid of the stresses of a working day and how it helps rejuvenate you after a long week and how taking exercise gives you great energy. Carmel emphasised the benefits of participating in sport for women and that it's never too late to start, make contact with your local club or group. There is always people that will help get you started.