

## Castle Miscellany – Our Club, Our People, Our Stories



### Our Outstanding Ladies ‘Scratch Cup’ Champions

1927-2025

#### Part One

The Ladies ‘**Scratch Cup**’ is our ladies Club Championship. It was first played for in 1927, when Molly McLoughlin won it. Our first winner was an exceptional young Irish golfer of the time, whose father was the steward in the Grange Golf Club. She first came to public attention in 1926, when she played in the British Girls Championship, one of just 16 girls who qualified for the matchplay stages.

In 1927 she went on to win the **Irish Ladies Close Championship**, played that year in Royal Dublin. In both those events she represented Dun Laoghaire Golf Club. A writer’s description of Molly was - *“Diminutive in physique, Miss McLoughlin is a stylist and her short game, especially approaching, was on a par with even our best professionals.”*

This year 2026, will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> time the Ladies Scratch Cup has been played. Over those years there have been 33 different golfers who have won the Cup. Winning once is a great achievement but winning on multiple occasions is indeed special. Over its 99-year history seventeen ladies have won the Cup more than once.

#### Our Multiple Winners

Wins	Name	Period
17	Mrs J.W. Naismith (Vera) – L.C.1951	1952 – 1978
17	Sinead Heraty	1990 – 2025
9	Yvonne Manahan	1988 – 2011
6	Mrs J.J. Carroll (Ethel) - L.C. 1948	1935 – 1948
5	Mary Kenny	1981 – 1985
4	Angela O’Flanagan	1933 – 1938
3	Mrs E. Taylor (Jessie) – L.C. 1957	1949 – 1973
3	Audrey Moran – L.C. 1959	1951 – 1959
3	Vivienne Wallis – L.C. 1976	1967 – 1994
2	Mrs Beatty – L.C. 1924 & 1928	1929 & 1930
2	Mrs J. G. Manahan (Gladys)	1965 & 1975
2	Simone Kenny	1986 & 1987
2	Maria Beaton	2007 & 2013
2	Aly Doyle	2012 & 2024
2	Aedin Murphy	2016 & 2020
2	Sally Lenehan	2018 & 2023
2	Kate Gallaher	2019 & 2021

Two ladies have had an extraordinary number of victories, the first being **Vera Naismith** who reigned supreme between 1952 and 1978, winning seventeen times. When Vera achieved her astounding number of victories, it was a total that pundits predicted would never be equalled or exceeded. However, the hurlers on the ditch, did not see foresee the arrival of **Sinead Heraty** on the scene who won her first Scratch Cup title in 1990 and last year equalled Vera Naismith's total of 17 wins. Competition during Sinead's time has been intense led by another of our extraordinary golfers, Yvonne Manahan, who won 9 times between 1988 and 2011. The big question . . . . . **will Sinead get to number 18 in 2026.**

***As 2026 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the Championship, the stage is set. Please contact Paddy Power for odds both for and against Sinead getting to the magical 18.***

## The History

Just six ladies in the history of the club have won the Scratch Cup more than three times. The primary focus of our story therefore will be on the '**Top Six**' recounting, in chronological order, what is known about each if those winners and their contributions to the Castle story.

The first of our '**Top Six**' ladies was **Angela O'Flanagan**, a winner four times between 1933 and 1938. Angela it is believed was Angela Bertha O'Flanagan, one of 9 children, the youngest daughter of a Grocer named James O'Flanagan, who lived and operated his grocery business in Avonmore Terrace in Terenure. Her Dad was born in County Dublin, and her Mum was from Tipperary. Angela was born in 1907. She married a Customs and Excise officer Patrick Joseph Murtagh in 1938. In 1940 she competed in the Scratch Cup, then under the name Mrs. Murtagh.

The second of our '**Top Six**' Champions was an English born lady, **Mrs J.J. Carroll**, born **Ethel Edith Simpson Koe**, who won on six occasions between 1935 and 1946. That name will ring a bell to a select number of members those who were junior members during the 1950's and early 1960's, as during that time our Club Secretary was a Captain J.J. Carroll. Ethel was Captain Carroll's wife. In addition to being married to Captain Carroll, and Mum to three children, Robert, Joycelin, and Anthony, she was a prominent member in her own right, a lady who served as Lady Captain in 1948. Ethel had a long and vibrant life for a person of that era, passing away at 87 years in Oxfordshire, England.

In the early days of the Club, the ladies did not compete for the same number of trophies as the men. The most historic ladies Cup is the **Victory Cup**, which dates to 1918. Unfortunately, the original cup was stolen and along with it the record of historic winners.

A significant Leinster event played in the Castle over 60 years, was a **Ladies Branch - Open Foursomes Match Play Tournament** played from 1939 until 1999. A Mrs Carroll, maybe Ethel, was a winner in 1941.

Today the Ladies have 3 designated Majors, being the <b>Captain's Prize</b> to the Ladies; the <b>Lady Captain's Prize</b> ; and the <b>President's Prize</b> to the Ladies.
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The third of our '**Top Six**' Champions was Tullamore born **Vera Naismith**, born **Ethel Vera Alexander** in 1914, the daughter of a Tyrone born Commercial Traveller and an Offaly Mum. Vera won the Scratch Cup 17 times, between 1952 to 1978, a 65% success rate, a rate that even Anikka Sorrenstam in her prime would envy!!!

In 1937, when Vera married her husband John, she was living with her family in Dun Laoghaire. Delgany is thought to have been her club before she married. Vera and John would have three children Pat, Pam, and Peter. Vera's husband John, also a Castle member, was the Managing Director of Auto Cars, a Ford dealership founded by his father, with premises both in Fenian Street and Milltown.

Vera, in addition to her astounding Scratch Cup record, had many other wins including the **Castle Open Foursomes Matchplay** tournament six times, between 1947 and 1980. Add to that a win in the Castle Mixed Championship in 1981, in partnership with the artist Frank Clarke and one might say "Vera's Golf Canvas was Complete" . . . . .

Vera in addition to her golf talents was also a top-class competitive lawn-bowler and a much-admired landscape painter. Over many years Castle scenes painted by Vera were displayed in the 'Six-Counties' section of our Dining room. Vera passed away in 1996, aged 82.

In the 1970's boy's golf in the Castle had taken root, but girl's golf was most definitely the poor relation. A Castle champion of girl's golf emerged to change that, being our wonderful member and 1985 Lady Captain, **Celeste Kenny**. In 1972 Celeste organised a girls competition at 8am on Thursdays during the school holidays. There was a regular turnout of around 20 Girls aged 10 to 11. Soon handicaps started to tumble particularly after David Kinsella became their coach sponsored by the Golf Foundation. In 1979 a Leinster Girl's Team won the Girls interprovincial title in Lahinch. Four of the five girls on that team were Castle girls, being Mary Kenny, Carina and Simone Kenny (Celeste's daughters) and Fidelma Casey.

One of those girls, **Mary Kenny**, is the fourth golfer in the the 'Top Six' list.

***"Mary Kenny, to date, was probably the most talented girl golfer to come through the Castle Juvenile system."***

***To be continued . . . . .***

### **Some Observations**

- *Six of our seventeen multiple Champions, to date, have served as **Lady Captains**.*
- *Three have served as **Captains of the Leinster Ladies Alliance** - Vera Naismith, Yvonne Manahan, and Sinead Heraty.*
- *Seven of the multiple winners since 1981 have been graduates of the **Castle Junior Girls programme**, accounting for a combined total of 24 wins.*
- *It is no surprise that there is evidence that **genetics** and parental example is a factor in success, as nine times winner **Yvonne Manahan** followed in the footsteps of her mum **Gladys**, who had two wins, and twice winner **Sally Lenehan** followed in the footsteps of her dad **Tom**, who had won two men's championships.*
- *One notable Lady in the list of three times winners is **Jessie Taylor**, who besides serving as our Lady Captain in 1967 is remembered annually when the ladies play for the **Jessie Taylor Challenge Cup**.*

27<sup>th</sup> March 2026