Connacht Branch Newsletter / Calendar of Events 2014-2015

Apologies for the delay with the 2014/2015 Calendar! Discussions have taken place with both Breaffy & the ITTA during the summer months and have come to a conclusion. The Branch is now in a position to communicate our activities and plans for the season ahead.

The Branch will be holding an AGM early into the season and would encourage parents, coaches, clubs and schools to attend. An agenda will be issued along with notice in due course. The website [www.connachtt.ie](http://www.connachtt.ie) will continue to be the Branches main means of communication but the Branch will be joining social media platforms in the coming days to provide an alternative medium.

**Connacht Calendar August – December 2014**

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| **EVENT** | **DATE** | **VENUE** |
| Senior classification | Sat 30th /sun 31st sept 2014 | National Basketball Arena |
| Connacht league 1 | Sun 7th sept 2014 | breaffy |
| Irish junior classification | Sat 13th/sun 14th sept 2014 | Breaffy |
| Connacht Academy | Sun 21st sept 2014 | Venue TBC |
| Connacht junior ranking 1 | Sun 28th sept 2014 | Breaffy |
| Connacht Senior Open | Sat 11th/12th Oct 2014 | Breaffy |
| ~~Connacht Leagues 2~~ | ~~Sun 19~~~~th~~ ~~Oct 2014~~ | ~~Breaffy~~ |
| Connacht academy | Sat 25th Oct 2014 | Venue TBC |
| Leinster GP | Sat 1st Nov 2014 | DCU |
| Connacht Junior ranking 2 | Sun 2nd Nov 2014 | Breaffy |
| Fermanagh Junior open | Sat 8th /sun 9th Nov 2014 | Fermanagh |
| Connacht Academy | Sat 22nd Nov 2014 | Venue TBC |
| Ulster Junior/Senior Open | Sat 29th/30th Nov 2014 | Belfast |
| Connacht league 3 | Sun 7th Dec 2014 | Breaffy |
| CONNACHT JUNIOR OPEN | 13TH/14TH Dec 2014 | Breaffy |

The Stiga Connacht Academy will continue with the same format focusing on Talent ID in the morning session and Development Squad in the afternoon session. This proved to be a hugh success last season enabling players throughout the Province to accelerate their development. It’s important for the future of Connacht Table Tennis that this initiative is supported and keeps rolling.

The Connacht Senior Open takes place early October and the Branch would encourage Connacht Cadets & Juniors to participate. Junior prices will be significantly discounted to encourage entry.

The Connacht Leagues / Top 8 will continue under the current format but has been moved to Breaffy accommodating larger numbers. Last season saw an upsurge in Senior Participation from all parts of the Province. We must not forget that there is a fun aspect to the sport and the Connacht Leagues is an ideal opportunity for all age groups and players with different levels of ability to interact. The Top 8 is increasingly competitive as our stronger juniors / cadets are developing to a level where they can now compete with seniors.

The National Junior League proved to be a successful project for the ITTA in 2013 with Players from Mayo & Roscommon & Galway participating. It’s a great event and the Branch would encourage more clubs and schools to get involved. The junior league caters for all abilities while at the same time demonstrates the importance of team play in the sport. This is a one-day event with a venue yet to be confirmed.

The Branch will be running five Junior Ranking Events throughout the season and players must participate in at least four events to be considered for Inter-Provincial selection. Exemptions will apply to players on international duty. Any player who enters a ranking event but is recorded as a ‘no-show’ will be invoiced for fees outstanding. The Top 3 players ranked in each of the six categories are guaranteed a place on the Inter-Provincial Squad. A decision on reserve players will be made later in the season.

**Connacht Calendar January – June 2015**

ITTA have yet to release dates for both National & Hopes Training Camps for 2015. Connacht Academy Sessions will not be confirmed until Camp Dates are released. The ITTA Calendar of events takes priority and may result in changes to dates of Provincial Events below. It is important that Provincial Events do not clash with Camps as an increasing number of Connacht Players are likely to be participating.

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| **EVENT** | **DATE** | **VENUE** |
| Connacht Leagues 4 | Sun 11th Jan 2015 | Breaffy |
| Munster Junior Open | Sat 17th/ Sun 18th Jan 2015 | Killarney |
| Connacht Junior Ranking 3 | Sat 24thJan 2015 | Breaffy |
| Fermanagh Senior Open | Sat 31st / 1st Feb 2015 | fermamagh |
| Connacht Junior Ranking 4 | Sat 14th Feb 2015 | Breaffy |
| Connacht Secondary Schools | Thurs 5th March 2015 | Breaffy |
| National Senior Champs | Sat 28th feb/ Sun 1st Mar 2015 | Dublin |
| National Junior Champs | Sat 21st / Sun 22nd Mar 2015 | Dublin |
| All-Ireland Secondary Schools | Early April | TBC |
|  |  |  |
| Connacht Primary Schools | TBC | Breaffy |
| Senior Inter Provincials | Sat 28th/Sun 29th March 2015 | Leinster |
| Junior Inter-Provincials | Sat 18TH / Sun 19TH April 2015 | Munster |
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Munster is hosting the Junior Inter-provincial this season which means transport and hotel accommodation will be required. The Branch will do everything possible to keep costs to a minimum. A levy will be imposed on any player travelling to the Inter-provincials this season. We will let parents / guardians know well in advance the likely cost. Any U12 player travelling to the event must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

All-Ireland Primary & Secondary School Championships are taking place outside the province so schools involved will have to make their own transport arrangements and incur the cost of entry. Connacht has done very well in schools competitions in the last few years and this is likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

The Branch is expecting a number of players to be called for International duty throughout the season. Parents need to be aware that the National Governing Body ‘ITTA’ impose a levy on Players travelling to these events. The International Primary Schools and International Secondary Schools Six Nations are taking place in Scotland .

ITTA funding will become available shortly for coaching in clubs, schools etc. The onus is on the club or school to apply but the Branch will be available to advise and facilitate the application process.

The Branch would also like to inform Parents that ITTA affiliations are due January 2015. Players wishing to play in National Competitions 2015 must be affiliated. Parents can affiliate juniors online at [www.irishtabletennis.com](http://www.irishtabletennis.com). The Connacht Branch will not be collecting any ITTA affiliations this season!

The Branch returned to profit in the last 12 months but unfortunately all of this profit went towards the payment of debt. The Committee put a financial restructuring plan into place during the summer period enabling the Branch to move forward productively. Projections would suggest that some funding will be available to support (junior inter-pros) and develop the sport (academy) within the Province.

The Branch is run by a committee consisting of seven members who have put many hours of work into running the association over the last 12 months. Members have gone so far as to rearrange their working schedules to accommodate Connacht and National activities. Members do not receive payments in any form and incur their own travelling expenses! The Branch would like to thank Parents for their contribution last season. Many Parents gave up their free time to assist with the set-up of venues and the running of Provincial activities. More support from Parents would be very much appreciated considering a busy season ahead. If any Parent / Guardian feel they can help out in any way, please make contact with the Branch Secretary. The Branch is particularly interested in female volunteers given the growth of girls participating in both Provincial and National activities.

A number of companies will be approached over the next 12 weeks with a view to corporate sponsorship. Discussions are already in progress with one company in Dublin and early indications are positive. If you know of any Company the Branch should approach, we would appreciate if you could let us know. These are challenging times for small-medium sized businesses not to mention Parents / Guardians and going down the corporate route is likely to be far more productive.

The Branch is very much open to suggestions and welcomes constructive criticism at all times. We now have a very strong and influential relationship with the National Governing Body and have created a working model that other Branches are trying to emulate. These are exciting times for Connacht Table Tennis with many years of success ahead of us!

All the best for the new season,

**Connacht Branch**