

## 2014 Dingle Adventure Race Formguide

This Saturday's Expert level race in Dingle has a star studded line up with frequent podium finishers of the past few years being joined by some exciting talented athletes with somewhat less experience at the adventure racing game.

The race favourite is undoubtedly last year's Dingle winner Tim O Donoghue who makes his season's Series debut this Saturday.

He has again concentrated on road running for the early part of the year with impressive results and his return to the hills at last Sunday's Carruntohill race produced a comprehensive victory and a new course record. The long running sections will suit him both on and off road and his biking is also very strong.

Last year's 2<sup>nd</sup> Eric Wolfe is back again and is fresh from a win at the series season opener in Waterford. He will hope his experience from last year will see him improve again but despite a likely lead off the bike it is hard to see him or anyone else match the reigning champion on the mountain running leg particularly as his mountain run descending is relatively poor at this level.

One who has improved impressively over the past couple of years and had victories in Gaelforce and Killarney last year is Aidan Mc Moreland. He is a good all rounder and smart racer but he may also find one too good in O Donohoe and will most likely scrap it out with Wolfe and a few others for podium positions.

Jerry Sullivan has turned to the longer Expert races recently but has yet to enjoy the degree of success that he had when winning all-round him in the Sport category for the past couple of years. The long running legs should suit him though he is likely to be closely matched by Des Kennedy on the running legs and it may come down to the kayak to separate these pair.

Others not to be discounted in the top 6 battle include former winner and runner-up Adrian Hennessy who is in good form having recently won the Ballyhoura Mountain marathon and TEAR 24 hr race. His close rival David Power showed good form winning the Blackstairs Adv Race in May and like Hennessy he will be looking to make up for a disappointing performance here last year when both suffered in the heat.

An improving sort who took a good 4<sup>th</sup> here last year is Christopher Murnane. His biking has improved and his running is usually very strong so he could again look to sneak into a top 6 scrap with the above mentioned contenders.

Amongst the others vying for top 10 finishes include podium regular Lonan O Farrell and triathletes Alan Kearney, Tim Downing and Paul Tierney whilst the strong running Kevin O'Brien and Barry Cronin might surprise some if they last the distance out well on the long run back to Dingle.

Locals with some degree of confidence behind them include Aodh O Currain, Brian Scanlon, Raymond Griffen and Simon Barry but it remains to be seen how well they will do against this super strong field.

In the vets category the usual suspects like Paul Mahon, Kevin Murphy, Sean Tangey and Brian Keogh are likely to all play second fiddle to the strong category favourite Des Kennedy.

In the ladies Expert race another Waterford race winner Fiona Meade will have a good chance to repeat that win here as she took an impressive win here last year also.

Emma Donlon, former Dingle and Series winner, had hoped to have this as her comeback race for the season but seems likely to miss out due to recent illness.

In her probable absence Meade is the deserving favourite who is likely to take a good lead off the bike over most of her main rivals apart from the Aquablue team's Ciara Mangan.

It is unlikely that Mangan will have the all round abilities of the experienced Meade for the long running legs in particular but she may still be in top 5 contention if her running is up to scratch.

One who has been training hard for this race and will be suited by the long run and mountain leg in particular is Derry's Moire O Sullivan. An ultra mountain runner of note in the past she has tailored her training towards these type of races recently so she is likely to get much closer to Meade than when 20 mins behind in last November's Westport Sea 2 Summit which favoured the stronger cyclists. The long run back to Dingle did not suit Meade last year and if O Sullivan can minimise her losses on the bike leg then she could conceivably make up a lot of time on Meade on the run back to Dingle and make the kayak leg vital in what may be a much closer finish than many might anticipate.

Local Joanne Ni Suilleabhain and Mary Mc Evoy are others who will be looking for a podium placings and likely top 5 finishes.

Raheny Shamrock's Niamh Garvey seem the likely vet ladies winner who will scrap for top 10 finishing positions with others like Sarah Mulcahy, Lucy Curtayne, Eibhiln Cleary and Siobhain Duggan.

In the DAR Sport race the favourite is Kerry based Pole Milosz Wojcik the favourite after some impressive podium finishes in the long race and a win over none other than Jerry O Sullivan last year in the Sport race here.

He will not have it all his own way with last year's 2<sup>nd</sup> placed John Kelly looking to go one better and with some improvement and experience he might do that though Wojcik will be hard to beat and Kelly will need some improvement on his Killarney St Patricks race form if he is to go close again.

Other podium contenders include Aodhan Mc Aleer and Derek Middleton whilst likely vet winner and top 5 finisher is Brendan O'Brien who had a very impressive outing in March in Killarney and could be in line for a podium finish here with Jimmy Lawlor sure to be not far away either.

In the ladies Sport race last year's winner Deirdre Nagle again looks the one to beat but with Mary Daly making the long trip to Kerry she will have to battle hard to retain her crown here again.

Daly is a proven racer with good running form though Nagle has a good running background and her course experience might give her a small advantage over her likely nearest rival in a likely close battle.

Maeve O Grady is an experienced long distance adventure racer that is likely to vie for a podium spot providing she starts with the elite group at 9.00.

Christine Hyde will be looking to repeat her vets category win of last year over Hilary Jenkinson and get maybe a top 5 finish but Fiona O Brien might spring a surprise and make it a couples double in the Sport's vet category to match Des Kennedy and Niamh Garvey in the Expert course .