

Dingle Race Report 2014

Last Saturday's Expert level race in Dingle certainly lived up to its billing with a star studded line up of the country's top racers of the past couple of years and some exciting talented athletes with less experience at the adventure racing game.

In the men's Expert race however the undisputed top adventure race performer of the past couple of years, Tim O Donohoe, showed his class with another emphatic victory here to add to his win here last year..

From the off last year's 2nd placed Eric Wolfe tried to use his biking strength to get clear of the chasing bunch with Simon Barry for company ahead of O Donohoe, 2012 winner Adrian Hennessy and Des Kennedy with one of the other race podium contenders Adian Mc Moreland missing the main break up front on the bikes and being left with no one to work with on the bike leg.

The gaps closed on the final bike section into the wind approaching Cloghane as Wolfe took only a marginal lead onto the mountain ahead of O Donohoe, Hennessy and Barry with Kennedy and Mc Moreland next just ahead of the chasing group which included Jerry O Sullivan and Lonan O Farrell.

On the mountain ascent the rest of the contenders were left to fight for the remaining podium positions as O Donohoe proceeded to amass a lead of almost 5 mins by the summit over Wolfe who in turn was over 2 mins ahead of O Sullivan, Kennedy, Hennessy and Mc Moreland and then a gap to O Farrell.

O Donohoe's lead was as expected increased on the descent as Wolfe lost some time to all his rivals though significantly not as much as he had here last year. O Sullivan was the 2nd off the mountain ahead of Wolfe, Mc Moreland and Kennedy with Hennessy losing several mins after a fall on the upper rocky section of the descent which certainly derailed his challenge for the podium.

Out on the road O Donohoe stretched away even further to lead by over 13 mins at the start of the kayak stage.

Behind him an intense battle for the podium was unfolding with just over 3 mins separating the next 5 to arrive at the kayak stage. Mc Moreland narrowly held 2nd ahead of Wolfe with a small gap to O Sullivan and Kennedy with Hennessy back in the hunt in 6th.

On the water Wolfe regained 2nd as Mc Moreland slipped to 3rd with O Sullivan 4th as Kennedy struggled with the testing conditions and capsized allowing Hennessy through to 5th.

O Donohoe at this stage was home and dry in another record time of 2h 47' 28" almost 14 mins clear of Wolfe who hung on to 2nd just 18 sec ahead of Mc Moreland with a gap then of 3 ½ mins to O Sullivan in 4th, Hennessy in 5th and Kennedy next in 6th taking the vets win with a good margin over his nearest rivals.

In the ladies race last year's winner Fiona Meade lined up but was intending to only complete the bike section in preparation for the cycling nationals in a couple of weeks time. Some were aware of this at the start but her main rivals were not as they set off to try to minimise her lead on the cycle over Connor Pass. Mead set the fastest ladies time by almost 3 mins but stopped there to the relief of her rivals.

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Former race and National Series winner Emma Donlon made the start line despite recent illness and she was close behind Meade when she dropped a chain at the start of the descent. This allowed Moire O Sullivan to close to within 12 sec on arrival at Cloghane with late entrant Sarah Galligan 3 mins back and a further 5 min gap to 4th placed Jenny Mc Cready and Siobhan Duggan.

On the mountain ascent Donlon showed good climbing form as she built a gap of 5 mins over O Sullivan with Galligan just over a min back in 3rd and then a 9 min gap back to Denise Casey in 4th, Mc Cready 5th and Mary Mc Evoy moving up into 6th.

On the mountain descent the leading 3 positions remained the same as the gap stayed almost the same between Donlon and O Sullivan as Galligan lost a couple of mins to the leading pair but was still in a safe 3rd position some 14 mins clear of Mc Evoy, Mc Cready and Casey who were separated by less than 30 secs coming off the mountain.

On the long road run back to Dingle O Sullivan slowly made inroads into Donlon's lead but was still some 1 ½ mins down on arrival at the kayaks with Galligan some 6 mins further back. Casey regained 4th on this stage with a gap of over 2 mins over Mc Evoy and Mc Cready who were only 25 secs apart.

On the water O Sullivan closed the gap behind Donlon to only 31 seconds with Galligan secure in 3rd. Casey still held 4th but by Mc Cready was only 3 sec behind and Mc Evoy a further 18 sec back.

On the final run to the line Donlon held on grimly to take the win in 3h 32'33" a mere 34 secs ahead of O Sullivan with Galligan showing good form to take 3rd place just over 7 mins back.

The battle for 4th went all the way to the line as Casey hung on to take 4th and top vet prize ahead of Mc Cready and Mc Evoy with less than 30 secs separating this trio.

In the men's Sport race last year's winner Milos Wojcik was up with the bunch arriving at the kayaks just behind Derek Middleton and Jimmy Lawlor.

On exiting the water Middleton held a narrow lead over Brendan O'Brien and Wojcik with John Paul O'Connell next best ahead of Pdraig Kelly and Paul Morrissey.

On the bike to Eagle Mountain Wojcik showed his power and built a 2 min lead over Jimmy Lawlor with a gap of a min back to the closely packed grouping of O'Connell, O'Brien, Morrissey and Kelly as Middleton slipped back.

At the summit of Mt Eagle Lawlor had closed the gap on Wojcik to a mere 42 sec with the same gap back to O'Brien in 3rd and then O'Connell and Kelly with Morrissey and Middleton in joint 6th.

On the descent back to the bikes these positions remained the same with Middleton moving into a close up 6th behind Kelly.

On the bike leg back to the distillery and run to the finish Wojcik increased his lead to take the win for the second year running in 2h 3' 5" some 2 ½ mins ahead of Lawlor with O'Brien less than a min back in 3rd, O'Connell 4th, Kelly 5th and Middleton 6th.

Ger Griffen took the first unplaced vets prize in 11th place overall.

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In the ladies sport race in the sprint to the kayaks joint race favourites Deirdre Nagle and Mary Daly were closely followed by Fiona Santry, Eilís Ní Dhúill, Claire O Donovan and Helen O Leary.

Ní Dhúill shows considerable paddling skills to take the lead off the water with Nagle and Daly next best.

On the bike leg to the base of Eagle Mountain Daly took a narrow 28 sec lead over O Leary with O Donovan 2 mins back just ahead of O Leary and Ní Dhúill.

On the mountain climb Nagle took a commanding lead of over 2 min over Daly with a further 4 mins back to a group containing O Donovan, Ní Dhúill and O Leary.

On the descent Nagle held onto her lead over Daly with O Leary in 3rd and Ní Dhúill closing up in 4th ahead of O Donovan and Santry in 6th.

On the cycle back the Dingle distillery transition the top 3 positions remained unchanged as O Donovan moved into 4th ahead of Ní Dhúill and Santry.

These positions remained the same as Nagle took the win for a second year running in 2h 23' 27" some 2 mins clear of Daly who was 4 mins clear of O Leary in 3rd. O Donovan took 4th a min further back with Ní Dhúill 5th and Santry 6th.

Bernie Condren made a welcome return to competition after an injury sustained last summer and took the vets prize with the 7th fastest time from the second sport wave.