

## 2014 Beir Bua Waterford Adventure Race Report

The 2014 Beir Bua Waterford Adventure Race featured on the National Expert Series list for the first time.

The race produced some close racing and was well received in superb weather despite a significant shortening of the course from that used in previous years dictated largely by tidal considerations in the River Blackwater.

Top triathlete Eric Wolfe was a late entrant and after two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes last year in Dingle and Killarney he was seen as the one to beat with the course seeming to favour those with strong biking power.

On the opening run Kevin O'Brien set the pace ahead of Jerry O'Sullivan with Wolfe bidding his time in 3<sup>rd</sup> ahead of Tipperary's Paul Tierney and Paul Mahon.

On the water however Wolfe lost time using a sit on top boat compared to his single kayak equipped rivals. The fastest paddling leg by some 96 seconds was recorded by last year's 2<sup>nd</sup> placed Noel Donohoe who had moved into 1<sup>st</sup> at completion of this stage just ahead of O'Sullivan with Mahon, Tierney, O'Brien and Caulfield all starting the bike leg within 30 sec of the leading pair with Wolfe about 2 mins further back in 7<sup>th</sup>.

On the long bike climb to the Vee O'Brien was soon dropped as O'Sullivan and Donohoe worked together to keep ahead of the chasing field. Tierney, Mahon and Caulfield worked together for about half the climb until Wolfe passed by with Caulfield the only one of the trio able to go with his impressive cycling pace.

This pair caught O'Sullivan and O'Donoghue close to the end of the climb with Wolfe taking a small lead out onto the mountain run ahead of O'Sullivan and then Caulfield and Donohoe a min back with a further 2 mins to Tierney who stayed a min ahead of Mahon with Kevin Murphy moving through the field with the day's 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest bike climb split to move up to 7<sup>th</sup>.

On the mountain run O'Sullivan struggled with cramp as Wolfe led at the top of the climb ahead of O'Sullivan with gaps then back to Caulfield, Donohoe and the trio of Mahon, Murphy and Tierney who summited together.

Wolfe is known for his poor mountain descending skills but with O'Sullivan cramping his losses were less than expected and he managed to only be marginally behind O'Sullivan by the end of the mountain run section.

Caulfield stayed in 3<sup>rd</sup> as Mahon's good descent brought him into 4<sup>th</sup> ahead of Tierney, Donohoe and Murphy.

On the mainly downhill bike leg to the finish Wolfe put on the power and O'Sullivan was soon dropped as Wolfe took his inaugural Nat adv race series victory in 2h 21' 36".

O'Sullivan just hung onto 2<sup>nd</sup> in the end just 3 secs ahead of the fast finishing Caulfield with Donohoe biking his way back up to 4<sup>th</sup> ahead of Murphy in 5<sup>th</sup> and Mahon in 6<sup>th</sup> with just over 5 mins separating the first six men home.

In the ladies contest the enforced absence of Moire O'Sullivan due to illness left Fiona Meade in a position to dictate the pace from the off as her rivals tried in vain to stick with her.

She held a lead of over 3 mins after the first run leg with Mona Sexton and Sarah Mulcahy next in just ahead of Mary Mc Evoy with Hilary Jenkinson a further 3 mins back in 5<sup>th</sup>.

On the water Meade maintained a good lead over Sexton and Mulcahy as Jenkinson moved into 4<sup>th</sup> ahead of Mc Evoy thanks to the fastest ladies kayak split of the day.

On the long bike climb to the Vee Meade really took control with a bike split over 4 mins faster than her nearest challenger Sexton who in turn was 3 mins faster than Mc Evoy who moved into a close 4<sup>th</sup> just behind Mulcahy starting out on the mountain.

At the summit of Sugarload Meade had a 12min gap over Sexton who in turn was 4 mins clear of Mc Evoy and Mulcahy in 4<sup>th</sup> but on the descent Mc Evoy managed to close the gap to Sexton to only 3 seconds as the leading order remained unchanged.

The final bike leg back to Cappoquinn was a straightforward one for Meade as she took another Series win in 2 h 38' 23" with almost 18 mins to spare over Mc Evoy who was just over a min ahead of Sexton in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mulcahy was next home in 4<sup>th</sup> with Jenkinson 5<sup>th</sup> and Dot Stone in 6<sup>th</sup>.