

Sea 2 summit 2014
Race report from Dessie Duffy,

4km run,-8km cycle,-climb croke Patrick,cycle 35kms,run 4km.

I normally finish my race season with The Dublin Marathon and start to get my focus on for the next year but with a brilliant season in the Adventure scene this year I really got the urge to give this last one a shot and see could my luck hold out to give me one more win.???

As of the last two years I decided to do GaelforceWest this year again and was delighted to win it. In Westport that night I was speaking to Peter O Farrell (a great adventure racer and 2nd on that day) and he was advising me I should do Killarney adventure race as it's a great event to test out endurance over a 4 hour event. So at that the seed was planted and of I went thinking about heading for Killarney.

So training plan in action and after some good advice from Paul Mahon of Outdoor Events I decided to enter Achill Roar a great event organised in Achill Island and managed to get myself a first place at it. Next step was the The Moxie challenge in Wicklow which was another hard event with hills I didn't think Wicklow had. Myself and Killian Heery had a close race here and I crossed the line one step in front of him which at this stage left me in good standings to get the national series title if I could take a first place in Killarney. Eric Wolfe was in the same position as me at this stage and we both knew we had to win to push each other down in points.

The Killarney event was another well run event and a really hard course that seemed to go on for ever, especially when your hunting or being hunted by Eric Wolfe and Aidan Mc Moreland another two top Adventure racers. With the win in Killarney I was top of the table for winning the series but all wasn't finished as I got a couple of competitors telling me you won't manage to win in Sea 2 Summit and especially when you don't know the course.

After a slow drive we arrived in Westport at 8pm on Friday evening. We registered at the castlecourt hotel and off to the first transition and racked the bikes. Off then to the base of Croagh Patrick and get a look at the cycle route, the route was as challenging as any of the adventure races. We headed back to the apartment and got some food in for the race. So Killian Heery, Keiran Cosgrove and myself were sharing an apartment with two great support men Michael Fitzpatrick and John Joe Rodgers and as you do we spent the night discussing the route and were the potential places to push the race hard and also were not to push it. We also had another contender for the race in touch with us Mike Reilly from the Cavan Kayakarun club and we knew he was running really well and had great potential to put myself and Killian under pressure. Off to bed and get the nights rest in and up at 6am for the reliable bowl of porridge. Headed out to check the bikes were as we left them in transition and check the temperature which was 3 degrees and left us all debating again was it jackets or just arm warmers etc. etc.

So off we go from Westport quay for our 2 km warm up run to the start line and get the race briefing for the event. We met up with another group of Cavan Kayak and Muckno tri club members all getting ready for their race ahead. Nerves flying and all race ready and into the courtyard for the start and wishing each other all the best, fellow competitor and another contender to apply the pressure Shaun Stewart wished me all the best and asked if I was feeling fit for it 2 weeks after the marathon. Race started and we're off and Shaun started to apply the fast race pace immediately and closely followed by Mike Reilly, Peter Cromie and Keiran Cosgrove and another couple of very strong runners held the pace at the front for about 1.5kms and myself and Killian started to work our way up to the front and Mike kept applying more pressure every time I pushed him so I left him as the pace setter as I started to see he wasn't on for letting anyone into T1 before him. Into t1 and out on the bikes, Mike Reilly, Killian Heery and myself and followed closely by Shaun Stewart and a strong hard race pace held to the base of Croagh Patrick. Another strong competitor Peter Tuohy come up to the back of our group and surprised us all as he passed us in the entrance to t2 as we hadn't found him on the back of our group. I think we had about a minute lead pulled on the next group and the pressure was on the hit the top of the reek and there was no one making it to the top before Sean as myself and Killian and Mike Reilly tried to close the small lead he took he just kept us at bay the whole way. Mike Reilly dropped of the pressure a small bit and then near the top Killian dropped a small bit and left Shaun first and me hitting the wall of the church 45 secs behind him. Away we go down the mountain with as fast a pace and struggling to keep my feet under me. I was starting to meet competitors on the way up and regular updates being shouted at me. 1 minute, 40secs, 2 minutes, all reports different and then someone shouted "slow down are you mad" in my head I answered mad=yes slow down-no way....

Into t2 for the last bike leg and I got an accurate update 1.45secs behind Sean and I felt great as I knew I was a stronger cyclist than Shaun. I caught Shaun on the Maam between the first and second climb. As I caught him we spoke and I seen he had injured his face on a fall on the mountain and I went in front and he took my wheel. I knew we had more long climbing and I had to push it really hard to drop Shaun, Over the hill and supporters at the top of the climb told me I had pulled 45 secs on him coming up the hill so head down and race the downhill as fast as I could to push the lead and not allow anyone else see me in the distance.

Into t3 where we racked the bikes and head out on our last run of 4km to the finish line. I knew I had a comfortable lead and I enjoyed my run home into the town of Westport with huge crowds and a brilliant atmosphere. The support was great to get along the way. Finished in 2.51.32 and set a new course record.

I would like to thank all the people who get together and put these races in place with help from all the local volunteers without whom they wouldn't be taking place.

I was delighted to win and hats off to my fellow competitors with brilliant times,
3rd Killian Heery,
5th Mike Reilly,
6th Kieran Cosgrove
and all the Cavan kayakarun and Muckno tri club members who all produced great races.

Dessie Duffy