

Gaelforce North 2013 Race Report

In the men's Expert series race the 2012 winner Adian Mc Moreland was the favourite but was led into the first transition by the strong running Ross Mclynn with Lonan O Farrell in 3rd and a group including Shaun Stewart, Darragh Mc Shane and Sean Mc Fadden next.

Mc Moreland soon was in the lead on the water however and was never to be headed again with Mclynn and O Farrell staying in the podium positions on the kayak leg.

On the bike leg to the foot of Errigal, Mc Moreland consolidated his lead over O Farrell who was now 2nd ahead just of Mc Lynn with Mc Fadden moving up the field with a strong bike leg to overtake Stewart in 4th.

The long climb up Errigal saw Mc Moreland consolidate his lead ahead of the closely packed grouping of Mc Lynn, O Farrell, Mc Fadden and Stewart with supervet Robbie Bryson having a great climb to move into the top 6 by the summit.

On the descent Mc Moreland maintained his lead over Mclynn and O Farrell with Stewart now in 4th as Mc Fadden faded dramatically from contention on the descent with Bryson now 5th and Stephen Perry moving into 6th.

The final bike leg saw Mc Moreland and Mclynn consolidate their 1st and 2nd placings with Stewart coming through to take 3rd ahead of O Farrell in 4th and vet winner Bryson in 5th and Perry 6th.

Mc Moreland's winning time was 3h 24' 34"

In the ladies expert race the strong favourite was Kate Cronin but her recent selection for next weekend's European championship led to her only completing the first two stages as a training outing.

Second favourite Suzanne Kenny did not show so it was left to the experienced supervet Joan Flanagan to take the mantle of favourite and she played a patient game to take an impressive win in 4h 29' 06".

In the early stages Fiona Gallagher, Mairead Cullen, Sinead Boyle and Lorraine Ashcroft showed good running speed but by the time they hit the foot of Errigal the field had become well spread with Flanagan now well ahead of Cullen, Boyle and Ashcroft.

On the mountain run section Flanagan, a previous Irish champion and international team member at several world mountain running championships, was never going to be caught. Cullen was now in a clear 2nd as behind her Liz Mc Laughlin moved into 3rd just ahead of Ashcroft and Boyle at the summit. On the descent Boyle managed to take a decisive move into 3rd ahead of Ashcroft and Mc Laughlin.

The final bike leg was to prove less dramatic than the mountain run with all top 5 placings remaining unchanged as Flanagan took a convincing win by over 30 mins ahead of Cullen in 2nd who in turn was well clear of Boyle in 3rd, vet winner Ashcroft in 4th and Mc Laughlin in 5th with wave 2 entrants Grainne Mc Daid and Maeve Mc Ginn taking a share of 6th.

In the Sport Series Spring race pre race favourite Jerry O Sullivan made his long trip north a worthwhile one as he took his second series win of the year as he tries to retain his 2012 National Series title.

He took a commanding lead over Adrian Farrell and Aodhan Mc Aleer in the opening run and held the lead on the next bike leg as Orlando Kelly moved through the field into 2nd with Mc Aleer still 3rd, Gary Gillespie up to 4th and Farrell now 5th starting the mountain run.

O Sullivan extended his lead on the mountain run with Mc Aleer moving into 2nd ahead of Farrell, and Gillespie with Kelly slipping to 5th.

On the kayak leg the leading 4 positions were unchanged as Donal Kane moved into 5th ahead of Kelly and Edward Fearon.

On the final leg O Sullivan stayed well clear to win in 2h 44' 45" over 7 mins clear of Mc Aleer with a tight 3 way battle for 3rd just being won by Gillespie with Farrell 4th and Kane 5th ahead of Kelly 6th.

The top vet on the day was John Donegan in 13th overall.

In the ladies sprint race for Sport Series points we were treated to some close racing for all the podium positions.

Vet favourite Claire Quinn held a one min lead after the opening leg ahead of Noreen and Emma Mc Gee with Debbie Corcoran then in 4th

On the bike leg to the bottom of Errigal, Corcoran moved into the lead ahead of Emma Mc Gee, Quinn and Noreen Mc Gee with Laura Moore now up to 5th.

On the mountain however Quinn had a flyer moving into a clear lead ahead of Emma Mc Gee, Noreen Mc Gee 3rd, Moore 4th with Corcoran falling back to 5th after losing significant time to her rivals particularly on the descent.

These top 5 positions remained unchanged on the kayak leg but on the final bike leg to the finish Emma Mc Gee moved into the lead and took her first Series win in 3h 22' 54", a couple of mins clear of Quinn in 2nd with Noreen Mc Gee in 3rd, Moore 4th and Corcoran 5th.

With Quinn placing on the podium the vet title went to Kathleen Gallagher in wave 2