

Connemara Adventure Challenge Race Report

With the sun and rain interspersed with hailstones and strong winds throughout the 2013 Connemara Adventure Challenge proved a stern test for all participants.

From the off Diarmuid Collins set a fast pace alongside this year's surprise packet Lonan O Farrell and these pair were locked together for the whole of the opening run and on the bike leg until O Farrell paid the price for using a road bike when he punctured and lost valuable time to his rivals which left him with no chance of a podium position with a 9th overall finish.

Behind this pair Brendan Conway, who has crashed out of the race when leading on the bike leg last year, had improved from 3rd off the mountain to lead at the end of the bike leg just ahead of Billy Weymouth who improved from 7th to 2nd with a very strong performance on a MTB with slicks.

Behind them Collins was next off the bike with vet Paul Mahon just behind. The kayak section was challenging and indeed latter participants had to miss this leg entirely due to the incidents of capsizes due to the worsening conditions. Conway fared worst of the leaders on this leg dropping from 1st to 4th as Mahon moved from 4th to start the final run leg in 1st ahead of Weymouth and Collins. On the final run leg however Collins soon took the lead and went on to win by almost 2 mins ahead of Mahon in 2nd, Weymouth 3rd, Conway 4th and Martin Nees in 5th.

With Mahon placing 2nd overall, the vet cat prize went to Brian Keogh in 6th just ahead of James Kane in 7th.

In the Ladies race the pre-race favourite Kate Cronin was never in any danger and held a top ten position from early on in the mountain stage. Despite losing ground with her knobbly tyred MTB on the bike leg, she had a strong kayak and final run legs to win the ladies race by more than 16 mins and finish an impressive 8th place overall less than 10 mins behind men's winner Collins.

Behind her Niamh Ní Chuaig was in a clear second place after both the mountain run and bike legs ahead of Sarah Galligan and Lesley O Connor but behind them 5th placed Fiona O Riordan had a very strong kayak leg to overtake Galligan and O Connor and close the gap on Ní Chuaig to less than a min starting out on the final run. O Riordan maintain this momentum coming home strongly to take 2nd ahead of Ní Chuaig in 3rd, O Connor 4th and Galligan 5th.

Misty Price took the vet title for the second year running after the category leader Hilary Jenkinson crashed out on the bike leg.