

Quest Killarney 2016 Adventure Race Formguide

All roads lead to the southwest this coming weekend for what Ireland's largest one day adventure race in the country, the recently renamed Quest Killarney event, with a sell out 2,500 entered.

The size of the entry is well matched by the quality of the field and almost everyone currently racing at the top level will be throwing their hat into the ring in the 70km Expert Series event but in reality to make top 10 will be reward enough for many top contenders with the strength in depth of the elite field line-up.

Dessie Duffy is reigning Series and race champion and has to be foremost amongst the favourite to win again but this year has had a couple of reversals and this course does not play to his biking strengths so it will surely be close as it was last year when he took the win ahead of Eric Wolfe, Aidan Mc Moreland (2013 winner), Jerry O Sullivan, David Power, Peter Cromie and Adrian Hennessy (inaugural Killarney race winner back in 2011) and all of these re-oppose Duffy again this year. Wolfe's mountain running has improved as shown last year when getting home ahead of Mc Moreland who, on paper, is probably best suited by this course but who's race form this year seem scant and a little below the heights of 2 years ago when he took several national series event victories but he could be just adopting to a train hard / race less strategy.

O 'Sullivan has been missing from recent events (AWOL on honeymoon no less!) and it will be interesting to see how his form is on this his "local" race whilst of the others above Power is showing good consistent form and is well suited by the running legs in particular of the course so will be hoping to sneak into the top 5 again and Cromie is a likely absentee due to injury.

However all of these will be joined in the race for top 5 placings by the pair who beat Duffy in Gaelforce North, Shaun Stewart and Kieron Kelly and after his impressive win in Gaelforce West Kelly will surely fancy his chances of confirming the placings here though Duffy and his closely matched clubmate Killian Heery both took wrong turns when leading Kelly on the main bike leg in that event.

Stewart's form back in June up north was super and a repeat of that could have him do very well but this course is not playing to his biking strengths so Kelly is taken to reverse those placings and get up amongst the podium regulars in the top 5 whilst Heery may well struggle a shade in the latter stages if he has gone hard from the gun as no doubt Stewart and Kelly will break fast from the traps.

Mark Nolan had a good race especially on the bike in Dingle, has been training hard for this event and will back himself with a fast start and probably the fastest bike split but the long mountain run on Mangerton could cost him places depending on his degree of anticipated mountain running improvement since Dingle.

Lonan O Farrell has been placed in many Series event and looks to be on an upward curve with an impressive 2nd recently at Achill ROAR ahead of Heery and he will be better suited by the longer distance and running bias of this race so should confirm those Achill placings ahead of Heery, Power

and Hennessy. His biking has improved to leave him close to par with the likes of Duffy, Kelly and Stewart and with increasing confidence post Achill he could well make a top 5 placing.

Garret Bracken is another that will hope to place highly after coming in alongside Duffy in Gaelforce North but might find it hard to repeat this here and is another that may need to be content with aiming for a top 10 placing as may Hennessy, Barry Cronin and John Joe Rodgers.

In the ladies race Emma Donlon makes a long awaited return to the Adventure racing scene after injury problems and if back to her best form she will certainly be hard to beat.

She has been posting some good results over shorter running distances so her long distance stamina may be untested this year but in the past this has never been much of an issue.

If she is not back to her best then the likes of impressive Moxie winner Ellen Vitting (2nd here in 2014) and Sarah Galligan, who presumably has recovered from recent injury, are both talented and competitive athletes who will certainly be there to take advantage and a great battle for the podium is anticipated here.

In the battle for top 5 placings you can add in current Series leader Lorraine Horan, improving Mags Fitzgerald who moves up from general podium placings in Sport events, Betty Walsh who makes a welcome return after being absent on the adventure racing circuit for a few years and you have the ingredients for a well contested event.

One of the overseas entrants with plenty of excellent fell running experience is Kim Braznell and if she can replicate her running prowess on the bike she could well figure high up overall and looks a shoo in for the over 50 ladies prize.

With this race as the showpiece amongst many other shorter distance races, it promises to be a memorable Killarney #Quest4adventure day on the hill.

2015 Achill ROAR Formguide

The Expert and Sport Series events taking place this coming Saturday looks like it will bring some top class racing action to Achill again.

In the men's Expert race last year's ROAR winner Dessie Duffy and his Cavan Kayak Run / Mucno Tri clubmate and 2013 winner/ 2014 3rd Killian Heery return to defend their positions with last year's 2nd and 4th Eric Wolfe and Adian McMoreland again back to challenge for the podium.

Duffy had a couple of reversals of form already this season but on this course and distance he still looks like the favourite though Heery is going well this season with a good win at Moxie Pro ahead of Wolfe back in July but based on recent GFW form both look well held by Duffy.

Mc Moreland, Lonan O Farrell, David Power and Adrian Hennessy and Barry Cronin would all definitely prefer a more testing run leg and less power biking and may have to contend with battling each other for a top 6 finish.

Others looking to make a break into the top 10 include Jonathon Caulfield, Johnny Mc Cabe and John Joe Rodgers.

The ladies Expert race looks like it will be a good one with recent GFW winner Emma Hand the on paper favourite.

On that occasion she had a big gap over Rachel Nolan but if Nolan has recovered from her other previous race exertions she could get considerably closer though she would prefer a tougher course ideally.

The other podium position seems likely to go the way of current Series leader and DAR winner Lorraine Horan who was 2nd here last year with the anticipated absence of podium regular Patsy Winters robbing the race of another podium contender.

The men's sport race is another intriguing contest with the double previous dead-heat "winner" Kieran Cosgrove the one they all have to beat.

Cosgrove has great strength on the bike for the final leg and will be looking to drop stronger runners like John Paul O Connell on the bike leg as he did when winning DAR.

These experienced pair might need to watch out however as the strong CavanKayakRun contingent includes Kieran's son Sean (4th here last year) and other young talents like Conor Smith (7th here last year) and Gareth O Reilly who will surely play their part in the clubs likely virtual monopoly of the top positions as in 2014 when they had 6 placed in the top 10 whilst Derek Middleton is another looking for a top 5 finish. Sean Cosgrove is the one that certainly could make the podium and more perhaps though the elder Cosgrove is a dogged competitor and will still be hard to beat.

The ladies contest looks like it will be a closely fought one with Race 2 Glory winner Lorraine Carey looking to confirm her placing over the runner up there Sandra Caulfield.

These pair will be opposed by Moxie winner Caroline Conway and a good battle is anticipated for podium positions whilst the welcome return to action of Orla Mc Evoy could surprise a few regulars if she is back to her best form but she may be a bit race rusty compared to others at this stage of the season.

Gaelforce West 2015 Formguide

Based on a preliminary entry list the in the men's Expert Series Gaelforce West race this coming Saturday last year's champion Dessie Duffy is again opposed by 4 time champion Peter O Farrell who finished 2nd here last year.

Duffy has had a mixed season so far with some early season wins followed by a serious reversal in the Gaelforce North race where he was joint 3rd with Garreth Bracken and well behind the winner and 2nd place Kieron Kelly who are both due to race here also.

He had a super sub 4 ½ hour ½ IM performance last Sunday and if recovered sufficiently will be again hard to beat but O Farrell is always at his best on this course and based on Gaelforce North form Bracken and Kelly will be there to take advantage if any weakness is shown by the top ranked pairing.

Barry Cronin also had a good race last w/e and will be suited by this course which favours runners somewhat as will Tommie Gill but realistically they will be hoping for a top 6 finish at best along with the strong biking trio of Nigel Keane, James Skehan, Jonathon Caulfield who should all make the top 10 with Caulfield and Skehan clearly on top form as evidenced by their strong showing at Moxie Pro recently.

Stephen Parry and Paul Tierney are coming into good form and also have chances of top 10 finishes.

The ladies race has no proven race winner listed currently so a first time winner seems likely though if recovered sufficiently after her top 10 placing in the Beast of Ballyhoura 72 hour race over the August bank holiday Rachel Nolan could well be first home.

She has podium placings to her name in previous Series races against strong opposition and if on form should prevail with previous 3rd placed Paula Pendergast, Elaine Mullen and Sandra Caulfield most likely to challenge her based on known form with mountain runner Elizabeth Wheeler possibly in the reckoning also if she bikes and kayaks well.

Other top 6 positions are hard to call with those in contention include Mairead Durkan and Maria Kiely.

2015 Moxie Race Reports

The Expert Series Moxie Pro race had some great racers toeing the line but as has been the case in recent times the Cavan Kayak / Muckno Tri clubmates Dessie Duffy and Killian Heery looked to be the pair they all had to beat.

Form the off it was Heery who showed super form and speed and he led Duffy with the Jonathan Caulfield, Eric Wolfe and Tim Downing heading up the nearest challenges on the opening bike leg.

On the mountain run Heery continued to gain advantage over the field as Duffy went astray in the mist and surprisingly then pulled out of the race leaving Wolfe to give chase with David Power and James Skeehan catching Caulfield on the run stage.

Into the water and Heery was again excellent in this discipline with John Mollohan then only one to better his time. More importantly he gained time on all of his main rivals as Power, Skeehan and Downing in particular lost out significantly here.

On the final bike leg Heery pressed home his advantage to take the win by in 2h 45' 55" with an astonishing margin of over 12 mins ahead of Wolfe in 2nd with Caulfield 2 mins back in 3rd.

Power was a further 5 mins back in 4th just 7 secs ahead of Skeehan in 5th.

Derek Kiely had an impressive debut performance and took 6th after a good battle the whole way round with his Go Tri clubmate Paul Tierney.

In the ladies race pre race favourite Sarah Galligan pulled up with a niggling injury at the start of the mountain run but by then the gauntlet had been well and truly thrown down by Ellen Vitting who finished behind Galligan in Killarney last year. Vitting was peerless on the opening bike leg (6th fastest overall!) as Maeve O Grady and Galligan gave chase – Each of these 3 ladies were using the event as a final “warm up” for the Beast Of Ballyhoura 72 hour race over the bank holiday weekend.

Vitting, like Heery in the men's race, proceeded to increase her lead over all the subsequent stages and took her maiden Series win in 9th place overall (3h 13' 31") almost 19 mins clear of O Grady in 2nd, Lorraine Horan who held 3rd throughout and Courtney Prestiige having a good mountain run to take 4th.

Eibhlin Cleary made a welcome return to racing at this level in 5th with Ann O Connor in 6th

In the Sports race the Cavan / Muckno representative and pre-race favourite Kieran Cosgrove led from the start to the finish with fastest legs posted on a ll land based stages but losing little time in the kayak either.

On the opening bike leg he was pursued by newbie adventure racer Laco Faska, Mark Hennigan and Barry Cronin but out on the mountain run Cosgrove moved further clear as only Cronin was able to move into 2nd as Aidan Farrell posted the 3rd fastest run of the day and Faska dropped out of contention with a poor run.

Cronin gained a slight advantage on Cosgrove in the kayak stage but it was far too little too late as Cosgrove powered home on the final bike stage to take the win in 1h 50' " some 5 mins clear of Cronin in 2nd with Farrell some 6 mins back in 3rd.

Derek Middleton finished 4th just ahead of the fast finishing Faska in 5th and Patrick Fitzgerald 6th.

In the ladies sport race Caroline Conway made a late appearance in the entries and she too is a lady that has been in training for the upcoming Beast event. The training showed as she took the lead from the start ahead of pre race favourite Debbie Meehan.

Conway, like Cosgrove, posted fastest leg times on all land stages and could afford to lose time to all her main rivals on the kayak stage with Meehan almost passing her but her final bike leg was decisive as she took the win in 2h 16' 41" with a margin of over 2 mins ahead of Meehan in 2nd.

Sandra Caulfield showed the value of a fast kayak leg moving into 3rd ahead of Jill Horan in 4th, Rozanne Bell 5th and Sabina Glynn 6th

SERIES EVENT UPDATE

We have recently been notified by the organisers of the Connemara Rough Diamond that their 2015 event will not take place.

We had been assured late last year that the 2015 event would take place on 26th Sept but this recent notification is indeed regrettable.

Apologies to all who have planned their Series races to include this race.

We do hope you will find alternative races to fit in with your plans

2015 Moxie Pro & Moxie Formguide - Revised

The next Expert and Sport Series events take place this coming Sunday in the west Wicklow setting of Tulfarris on the banks of Blessington lakes.

Based on the Final entry list which is now available for the Expert class Moxie Pro it looks like another dust-up between the top 3 of last year, reigning Series Champion and winner here last year Dessie Duffy, runner-up Killian Heery and Eric Wolfe.

The Cavan Kayak Run / Muckno Tri clubmates both had below par showings in Gaelforce North a couple of weeks back but both can paddle well and are good runners and bikers to will surely figure at the top end as should Wolfe who's certainly should be suited by the bike course.

If these 3 are not on top form however there are others in the field that will give them plenty to do for the win here.

John Wolohan is a top level paddler and should be fastest on the long paddle stage. His overall run and bike fitness has improved and he will hope to hang on to a top 5 position but it seems unlikely that he would make the podium in this strong field.

Other strong paddlers in the field that have perhaps stronger podium ambitions and certainly top 6 chances are Greg Byrne and Barry Cronin with Byrne likely to be the strongest of these as a good all rounder as Cronin is perhaps a little weak on the bike for this level as seen here last year.

A trio from the triathlon world who have strong top 6 claims but who may be somewhat suspect in the paddling department are David Power, Alan Kearney and Tim Downing.

Power lost a huge amount of time in a relatively short paddle when a close second to Cronin in the Blackstairs race and needs to have his own single kayak and execute the stage well to have a chance of doing well here but is in good form based on a good result in Dingle.

Kearney was well positioned after a very strong bike leg in Dingle so this course will suit him but based on last year here, he too will need to improve his kayaking if he is to figure prominently.

Downing has had good showings in Killarney and again has realistic top 6 ambitions if he can minimise his losses on the water.

Others that have decent Series form recently include Jonathon Caulfield who will be suited by this course could do quite well and Gavin Byrne who had a good top 10 finish in Dingle plus possibly Sean Conroy and Paul Tierney if the latter has regained his fitness levels of 2014 who could both sneak into the top 10.

In the ladies race Sarah Galligan won impressively here last year and will be favourite to repeat that with Maeve O Grady likely to prove her closest opposition.

Galligan is strong all round and should have the race sharpness over O Grady who would be suited by a longer and possible tougher course.

Ellen Vitting is a strong runner who could well make a good charge for the podium if she can paddle well along with Dingle winner Lorraine Horan, Lynda Talbot, Eibhlin Cleary and Edel Conroy.

In the Sports series Moxie race Series leader Kieron Cosgrove is a last min entry and looks a strong favourite based on recent winning form and the course here.

Derek Middleton is one with good known form but he was a bit back in Dingle in a strong field but could do much better here.

Brendan Ward who was 4th here last year and Patrick Fitzgerald are others with good form and top placing ambitions as no doubt will some of the dark horses in the open field.

In the ladies Sport race last year's 3rd Jill Horan will be looking to improve but Deborah Meghen will certainly have similar winning ambitions and could well succeed here with Sandra Caulfield also having realistic podium prospects. Rozanne Bell and Mary Collins could also do well here and make the top 5 whilst the returning to racing after pregnancy duo of Caitriona Nic Caba and Barbara Stritch could do well if back to race fitness.

2015 Dingle Adventure Race Formguide

This Saturday's Expert level race in Dingle has a star studded line up with multiple race winners and National Champions past and present joining podium finishers of the past few years and some other talented athletes on the start line.

Despite the presence of 2014 Series winner and recent Waterford race winner Dessie Duffy the race favourite is probably last year's Dingle winner Tim O Donoghue who makes his season's Series debut this Saturday.

He has again concentrated on road running for the early part of the year and the long running sections will suit him both on and off road and his biking is also strong though possibly a bit behind some of the others in this field.

Duffy's main strengths lie on the bike so this course format will not really suit him but he is no slouch on the mountain and he should make the reigning champion work hard with another course record possibly on the cards if conditions allow it.

A newbie to this race is top level Belgium based triathlete Mark Nolan who is very strong on bike and on foot and he could well challenge these top two if his mountain running and kayaking disciplines do not let him down.

Last year's 2nd Eric Wolfe is back again will be in with a shout of the podium again as will former winner Diarmuid Collins who showed great form to win the Coraunthill race last Sunday but who's biking weakness generally leaves him with too much to do to have a realistic winning chance here in this sort of field.

Jerry O Sullivan had a good result here last year and will be again hoping to play a part in the top 5 placings whilst other with similar ambitions that might just have to be satisfied with competing in this very strong field for top 10 placings include Barry Cronin, Adrian Hennessy, David Power, Kieran Cosgrove, Milosz Wojcik (Sport winner in 2013) and Alan Kearney.

The ladies race looks fairly wide open with podium regulars like Patsy Winters, Sarah Mulcahy, Lynda Talbot, Michelle Daly and Regina Dempsey likely to figure prominently though with lots of newbies like Noreen Harvey of Mallow a/c in the field there could be a surprise result here.

In the men's sport race with many of the usual suspects option to do the longer race the men's race looks fairly open with challenges coming from the likes of John Paul O Connell (4th in Waterford recently and 4th here last year) and Derek Middleton who was 6th here last year whilst the evergreen local Sean Tagney who is strong on the bike which the sport course slightly favours could be in with a podium shout if his running has improved.

The women's sport race has some high calibre athletes entered with triathlete Lorna Wolfe likely to be the favourite if she can run down a hill and kayak successfully.

If not then Maeve O Grady is a strong all-rounder who should make the podium and others looking to figure in the shakeup include Judith Malcom, Karen Nolan, Stacey Masterson and Hilary Jenkinson.

2015 Beir Bua Waterford Adventure Race Formguide

The 2015 Beir Bua Waterford Adventure Race features as the opening Expert National Series race this weekend based in Cappoquin.

Based on the currently available provisional entry list top of the race predictions has to be 2014 expert Series winner Dessie Duffy who was unbeaten in the 2014 Series and will look to continue those winning ways on a course that should suit him.

Joining him on the long trip from the Monaghan / Cavan border is Kieran Cosgrove who could well prove to be best of the rest in the podium battle. He had a good race when dead heating with Jerry O Sullivan (2nd here last year) in the 2014 Achill ROAR and will also be suited by the cycling aspect of this race presuming he can safely negotiate the kayak stage.

Noel O Leary is a likely late entry that will be suited by the kayak stage in particular and could figure in the race for the podium

John P O Connell could well be a name of note IF he is the same John O Connell who regularly heads the results at Munster multisport events. If he is one and the same then he could well give Duffy a good run for his money but it remains to be seen how the kayak stage might evolve.

Paul Mahon was 6th here last year and will be looking for a top 5 finish and possibly top vet in the rankings after Cosgrove.

Not yet entered on the provisional list are others such as Chris Caulfield and Noel Donoghue who would be suited by this course if they were to show.

In the ladies contest there is no standout favourite currently entered but Sarah Mulcahy looks set to improve on her 4th place finish here last year and 6th placed Marie Sheehan similarly should improve up the rankings.

Kara Reilly, Maria Kiely and Sarah Duffy are others that will be looking for a top 5 finish in an open looking contest currently