

2013 Achill ROAR Formguide

The next Expert and Sport Series events take place this coming Saturday in the idyllic setting of Achill island in Co Mayo.

With last year's race and Series winner Tim O Donaghue absent from most of the races this season it will be up to the chasing pack from last year to try to take the top spot this time round.

Noel O Leary, Adrian Hennessy and Noel Donohoe were 2nd, 3rd and 4th here respectively last year with Alan Gavin close behind and these should again be closely matched.

O Leary has not raced recently due to a running injury but is in strong cycling form and will be amongst the leaders with the necessary skills to paddle fast kayaks so could go close again.

Adrian Hennessy will hope to do better in the kayaking than last year if he is to have a chance of winning this time round whilst ex international paddler Donohoe will do well to hold onto a possible lead after the water stage.

Paul Mc Kay is a strong New Zealander in the field so he could be one to shake up the field though the surprise in the field might be the improving Richard Meaney that will seek to build on a fine 4th recently in Gaelfoce west. He could be due a win if he can get his paddling act together and minimise his losses to the stronger paddler in the field though he needs to have a somewhat fast single boat to realistically have a chance at an overall victory.

A vet looking for top 5 finish is Chris Caulfield who showed some strong form early in the season whilst Patrick Dirrane in another vet that should make the top 10 with Stephen Perry.

Last year's ROAR and Nat Series Expert winner Marie Boyle makes a welcome return to racing and if she is race fit she will again be in the mix for the top spot on the podium.

Anne Marie Egan is current series leader and will pose strong opposition to last year's champion as will Christina Mackensie who beat Egan in the Moxie pro earlier in the year though Egan did take a wrong turn on the run section. Mackensie is a very strong athlete but having completed two sub 12 hour Ironman distance events in the past 6 weeks, including a victory in the "Hardman" event in Killarney 2 weeks ago, it is not clear if she will have recovered sufficiently to win here.

Aideen Keenan is another with improving recent form that will be hoping to make the podium along with Yazmin Kenny if she can regain her good form again as she is likely to get a good lead on the water and another top 5 contender Debbie Meehan.

In the men's sport race last year's joint ROAR winner and outright Nat Sports series champion Jerry O Sullivan is back and even though he has had a series of recent injuries he should still be strong enough to win again here.

Dean Gallagher is a local junior who is fancied to make the podium after a fine showing here a couple of years ago along with Brendan Ward whilst vets Ger Henehan and the strong biking John Causey will be hoping to minimise their losses on the water stage if they are to challenge for top 5 positions.

The ladies race looks like it will be closely contended with Grainne Read and Deirdre O Connor foremost of those with known adventure racing form and realistic podium aspirations whilst others such as young triathlete Rachel Hawker could well spring a surprise on her more experienced rivals.

The local fancy is the fast running Catherine Conway who should go close if she stays in touch with the other girls on the water section.