

2014 Achill ROAR Adventure Race Report

The idyllic setting of Achill Island in Co Mayo was combined with great weather and some top class racing last weekend particularly by the super strong men of the Cavan KayakRun club and 2 superb ladies winning performances.

The men's Expert race was a virtual who's who of the current season's top racers with the Series' strongest in depth field of the year.

From the off those using the faster single kayaks took advantage of the slack winds on the lake and it was John Mollohan who was paddling a K1 that amassed almost a 2 min lead over last year's winner Killian Heery, Michael Reilly and then a small gap back to Dessie Duffy and Killian Heery with one of the other race favourites Eric Wolfe almost a min further back and Des Kennedy losing out badly to his main rivals more than 6 mins down on the leader.

On the Minnaun mountain run Kennedy showed his running prowess with the fastest run of the more than 3 min faster than Duffy but coming into transition he was still some 24" seconds adrift of the leading pair of Duffy and Heery who set out on the bike section together.

Reilly was next in some 3 min down on Kennedy with Wolfe another min back with Aidan Mc Moreland just behind.

On the bike leg Duffy and Heery worked well together to distance themselves from the field and by the time Duffy pushed on the approach to the bike checkpoint Heery was showing the effects of recent illness as he dropped back and was eventually caught and easily passed by the charging Wolfe in who had shaken off the attentions of Mc Moreland and Kennedy in turn as the valiantly tried to stick to his wheel.

Duffy took the win in emphatic style in a super time of 2h 52' 11sec almost 7 min clear of Wolfe with Heery over 2 min back in 3rd and Mc Moreland a few mins back in 4th.

Kennedy took the vets title in 5th overall ahead of Caulfield in 6th.

In the ladies contest the only girl to have a single sea kayak arranged took full advantage as the hot pre-race favourite Moire O Sullivan immediately took over 2 min lead over Orla Stephens who in turn was clear of Lorraine Horan, Edel Hennessy and Jacqueline Le Bourhis .

On the mountain O Sullivan showed her prowess at her specialist discipline with an run which was almost 15 mins faster than the closest of her rivals as she reached transition some 20 min clear of Niamh Garvey who was in a close battle for the minor podium positions with Horan, Patsy Winters and Hennessy.

On the bike it was more of the same as O Sullivan set the fastest bike leg to take her 3rd Series win on the trot in an time of 3h 26' 17" and an impressive 14th overall.

Horan was next best on the biking leg as she took second place 36' back with Garvey 3rd, Winters 4th, Theresa Kilgannon 5th and Hennessy 6th as Orla Stephens took the vets title in 8th overall

In the men's Sport Contest the renewal of the 2012 dead heating winners Jerry O Sullivan and Kieran Cosgrove was the main focus with several other contenders hoping to take advantage of this probably cat and mouse game.

From the off the paddling skills of Jim Meskill were in evidence as he amassed a more than 2 min advantage over a closely bunched group of Jerry O Sullivan, Warren McIntyre, Kieran Cosgrove and Jonathon Caulfield.

On the run stage Jerry O Sullivan set the fastest leg of the day and amassed a lead of some 2 ½ mins going onto the bikes with his main rival Kieran Cosgrove 2nd ahead of Caulfield 3rd, Noel Carroll and Kieran Cosgrove's son Sean in 5th.

As expected Cosgrove caught O Sullivan on the bike leg but opted to sit slightly behind rather than be drawn to the front as he had been tailed to the finish when he adopted those tactics here 2 years ago.

He chose to make his attack on the last hill of the stage coming back towards Keel from the Deserted Famine Village. Try as he might he could not shake off the attentions of the ultra competitive O Sullivan and this pair again sprinted to the line crossing together for another dead heat.

Caulfield had a strong bike leg to close to within 2 mins at the end in 3rd just 37" ahead of Sean Cosgrove in 4th, Damien Mc Connell 5th and Jimmy Lawlor taking the vets title in 6th.

In the ladies Sport race the favourite from Mayo Mary Daly was first out of the water with a nice lead over Berenice Lambe and Tara Reale with another Mayo local Ann Marie Egan 4th and Deborah Meghen and Nicki Innes next.

Daly showed her running skills to good effect as she set the fastest run leg of the day to take a 2 ½ min lead onto the bike ahead of Tara Reale with the battle for 3rd being led by Amanda Brady who was followed closely by Mairead Durkan, Meghen and Egan.

On the bike leg Daly consolidated her lead with the day's fastest bike leg to take a clear win in a time of 1h 52' 19".

Despite completing an Ironman race just 6 days before Meghen set the day's 2nd fastest bike time to take 2nd ahead of Reale in 3rd, Brady 4th with Durkan taking the vets title in 5th ahead of Lambe and Egan.