

Gaelforce West 2013 Formguide

All roads lead to Westport for the annual showdown of who who in the national adventure racing series event at the Gaelforce West event this Saturday.

In the men's Expert series race the winners of 2 the last 3 years Tim O Donoghue and Padriag Marrey both miss out due to injury but at the top of the field it is set to be a tight fought race for the podium.

Heading anyone's short list has to be 4 time winner Peter O Farrell who always has a strong showing here usually with a steady start and typically only taking the lead in previous wins with a strong climb on the reek. He is set to be well matched by last year's runner up Adian McMoreland who has been in good form already this season with wins at Gaelforce North and Race to Glory where O Farrell was in 2nd on a relatively short and sharp course compared to this test of stamina.

The two picks of the pack in the fight for the podium who have both being showing great form in triathlons with particularly strong biking legs are last year's 4th Dessie Duffy and locally based Tom O Dowd who was 2nd here in 2011. Duffy will have to improve on his mountain descent to challenge the top two but will surely have learned from his experience of last year whilst O Dowd has plenty of course experience if all guns are firing right on the day.

In the battle for top 6 placings those coming into the reckoning are likely to be Kieran Cosgrove (1st Achill ROAR Sport 2011), Michéal Forde (5th here in 2010) and Gearoid Hynes (2nd Connemara Adv Challenge 2012) whilst top 10 ambitions will also be harboured by Richard Meaney, Lonan O Farrell, Nigel Keane and vet title contenders Paul Mahon, who took that title here last year, and Stephen Perry.

In the ladies contest the winner for the past couple of years Emma Donlon makes a welcome return to the scene after injury. She is certainly in great cycling form though her running training might well be somewhat short of ideal due to injury problems recently.

Kate Cronin, who was runner up on her Gaelforce West debut here last year, is in excellent running form as evidenced by a superb 78' half marathon recently. Her biking is strong and she seems likely to be a big threat as Donlon aims to take her 3rd win in a row on a course that she has made her own in recent years. The strength of these top two see them likely to make top 20 or possibly 15 overall.

Current national series leader Anne Marie Egan looks likely to be first local home but is unlikely to threaten the top two on current form but should make the podium whilst the remaining top 5 and vet places look wide open.