

They Cycled Around Ireland For Emer

Team Youghal completed Their 'Race Around Ireland' for The Emer Casey Foundation at 12.48pm on Saturday the 19th September, 2010.

The Race Around Ireland is far and away the toughest cycling endurance test in Europe and is second only, to the race across America (RAAM) which is the toughest endurance race on the planet.

Team Youghal completed the race in eighty eight hours and eighteen minutes knocking over an hour off their previous time last year of 90 hours and 6 minutes. Team Youghal covered a distance of 2,160.5 km or 1,350 miles with an average speed of 24.5 km/h.

The Emer Casey Foundation is dedicated to providing funding to the 'Disovary Consortium' to secure the best independent research to detect the early signs of Uterine/Ovarian cancer.

Following the death of local Youghal girl, Emer Casey, in June 2006, the Casey family promised they would do all they could to help this research in the hope of securing a future of early detection.

In order to raise funds and awareness of this worthwhile charity Team Youghal started their epic journey in Navan at 8.30pm on Day One, the 14th September, after team member, Christy McCarthy, a family member of the Nationally known Youghal Pipe Band, played the National Anthem on the pipes.

With Ger Flanagan in the saddle Team Youghal started up the North East coast of Ireland towards Belfast. Not long into the race Ger and the rest of his team, Michael McCarthy, Christy McCarthy and Eoin Whyte, experienced strong winds and heavy rain which hampered their progress through the Northern Counties.

As morning broke on Day Two the 15th of September the weather improved and saw the second section of the team, Kieran Greoger, Brian Fitzgerald, John Twomey and Tommy Roche, leaving the North of Ireland at approx. 9.15 am.

Team two then handed over to the first team who continued the journey through Donegal, which claimed the only casualty of the race, when Eoin Whyte came off his bike on treacherous roads before Mamore Gap in Co. Donegal.

Eoin injured his hand which rendered him unable to cycle and Christy McCarthy took up the mantle and conquered the steep climb through the Gap.

Team Youghal continued through Donegal, Sligo and Co. Mayo and were greeted by a lovely sunny morning when they came out of Galway on Day Three, the 16th September.

In glorious sunshine Team Youghal cycled through Co. Clare through 'The Burren' then along the West Coast through Kilkee and into Limerick City. Team Youghal then continued South West out of Limerick into Co. Kerry. As darkness was falling they cycled through Kerry into the Gap of Dunloe and onto the scenic Ring of Kerry.

On the morning of Day Four, the 17th of September, Team Youghal entered into their home county of Cork, reaching Mizen Head at approx 8:30am and from there Team Youghal continued on to Skibbereen, Kinsale and Blarney before reaching Cork City.

In Cork City John Twomey took on 'St. Patrick's Hill' at breakneck speed which was an incredible sight. The Team then cycled through Cork County and into their home town of Youghal where all the team cycled in unison into the town to a hero's welcome at approx. 6pm.

After a very brief stop-over Team Youghal continued into Co. Waterford via The Mahon Falls as darkness descended.

Fuelled by the welcome they received in their home Town they continued up through Wexford and into Wicklow, where Tommy Roche took on Mount Leinster, and won, as brightness began to rise on the morning of Day Five, the 18th of September. John Twomey then blazed through his familiar training ground, The Sally Gap, with Tommy Roche and Kieran Greoger conquering the final climb of the race at 'Cupidstown Hill' in Co.Kildare.

The team then entered Co. Meath, where the rain began to fall again. All of the team then took turns at cycling until they reached the outskirts of Navan and close to the finish line. Team Youghal then crossed the finish line together to cheers from Youghal supporters at the finish line in Navan.

After crossing the line Team Leader Ger Flanagan said;" We are delighted to finish the race and even more delighted that we beat last year's time. We were better organised this year in every department and it showed throughout the race and we definitely benefited from that organisation and I want to say with all my heart, thank you to the lads both in the saddle and in the support crew. Also I would like to thank the people of Youghal who came out in force on Friday when we cycled through the town and the people from Youghal who travelled up to Navan to meet us at the finish line. Finally I want to thank our sponsors for the team; Jack O'Patsy Pottery and Youghal Kia, and in the media; The Evening Echo, and Youghal News with a special thanks to Cork's 96FM and Community Radio Youghal who supported us all the way around."

Media Coordinator with the Team, John Hennessy, said;" The lads were under a lot of physical pressure, but they coped with it brilliantly. I have never seen such a great group of committed and focused people who are giving it their all for the Emer Casey Foundation and let's remember this team is made up of ordinary blokes, like Health Care Workers, Printers, Gardai, Retired Teachers and Fire Officers and are full amateurs, not semi professional cyclists, so they deserve incredible credit. The support Crew of Peter Coady, Tom Fitzgerald, Robert Heffernan, Peter Roche, Aonghus O'Broin, Jimmy Healy, Claude McCarthy and Maurice Flanagan also played a vital role in the team's success, providing invaluable backup and navigation support during the race."

John Hennessy also said;"I would also like to thank Darina Clancy, Ray Flanagan and Derek Kiely who were part of the crew providing media coverage for the team."

After Team Youghal have got their breath back preparations will start for the team to do it all again.

What makes The Race Around Ireland such a fantastic challenge is the constant flow of the race which runs 24 hours a day from start to finish, with no let up and that overwhelming desire not only to complete the race, which is a huge challenge in itself, but to win it and defend titles!

The race is part of the Ultra Marathon Cycling Association (UMCA) World Cup Series and the race is organised by the Navan Road Club and is sanctioned by Cycling Ireland.

Unlike other cycling races such as the RÁS or the Tour de France, the course is in no way roped off, there are no marshals controlling traffic flow, and there are no planned rest stops or stages in this event.

For further information and pictures from the event log on to: www.teamyoughal.com