

Official Launch of Team Youghal's Race Around Ireland

Team Youghal is sponsored by Jack O'Patsy Pottery and KIA Motors Youghal.

By Derek Kiely
In Youghal

TEAM YOUGHAL had their official launch Monday night at the 'Mall Arts Centre' in the Mall House ahead of their attempt to defend their 'Race Around Ireland' eight person team title.

The race around Ireland is far and away the toughest cycling endurance test in Europe and is the World's second toughest endurance race and in Ireland the cyclists of Team Youghal will have to cover a distance of 1,350 miles travelling through all four Irish Provinces with many steep climbs and sharp descents along the way, starting at 8pm on Tuesday the 14th of September in Navan.

What makes this 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.

In terms of a sporting event, this really is up there with one of the toughest tests there is as the relay style strategy of Team Youghal will come into play over the four or five days of constant peddling.

There will be a cyclist racing at all times 24 hours a day and the team should enter County Cork via Kerry on Thursday night and make its way by Mizen Head, on through Schull, Bantry, Skibbereen, through the outskirts of Cork City and at approximately 7am on Friday morning the team should be tackling St Patrick's Hill and then make its way on to East Cork, through Carrigtwohill, Middleton, Castlemartyr, Killeagh and then through its home town of Youghal where there is one of many time stations.

When you consider that this part of the race is just Cork City and County it puts the 1,350 mile distance into perspective.

The Team Youghal cyclists will cycle to raise funds and more importantly raise awareness for the Emer Casey Foundation and are Ger Flanagan, Tommy Roche, Christy McCarthy, Brian Fitzgerald, Kieran Groeger, Eoin Whyte, Michael McCarthy and John Twomey.

Following a video display at the official launch Mayor of Youghal Town Council Mary Linehan Foley told the East Cork Journal "It is my pleasure to launch Team Youghal's bid to defend their Race Around Ireland title and I want to thank the lads for their dedication and commitment to a very worthy cause in the Emer Casey Foundation, they have put Youghal on the map in a sporting sense and have raised awareness to a foundation that deserves everyone's support".

Team Youghal, team leader Ger Flanagan explained the route involved and the ambition to beat the existing winning time in 2009, which stands at 90 hours and 6 minutes, he said "We have a great team involved in this the World's second toughest endurance race. We have a team of eight great cyclists, plus a support crew that are invaluable in terms of making this all work. I have said it many times before, we are nothing without our support team and I want to thank all our sponsors and friends and families for their support throughout the year"

Juliette Casey mother of the late Emer Casey also attended the launch and said "I want to thank Team Youghal and everyone who have shown tremendous support for the foundation.

We started off as a family run foundation and now because of the tremendous support we also have friends helping us to run things. We have three PHD Students working in the area researching Ovarian Cancer and that is only possible because of the fantastic support that we have received and I want to thank everyone for their support”