

GAELFORCE MOUNTAIN RUN

COURSE DESCRIPTION 22KM EXPERT

STAGE 1

The route starts from the back of Killary Adventure Centre and heads across the bog for the first kilometre until it joins the Western Way walking trail. This first section is quite wet and it is almost impossible to keep dry feet. It is however a lovely springy surface to run on and sets you up for further challenges.

Once you reach the end of this you are on the Western Way which is a way marked trail heading across the road and continuing along through the forest. This trail crosses a ford after roughly 500m and then you bear away to the right (the 12km race will go left) and follow a forestry road until you get to the end of the forest. Once here you take an immediate left back towards the forest along the old Western Way route which is now overgrown with rushes. Running along here you will meet wooden gates and take an immediate right up the hill to commence your first ascent of the route. The fence will be marked at 10m intervals with red ribbon and you must stay close to this.

STAGE 2

This first hill is only small at 324 metres and you will keep the fence to your left as you climb up the hill. It is quite gentle at the start with a short sharp ramp nearer the top and with no defined path it is the taste of things to come. Due to safety constraints you have to stay within 10m of the fence and maintain it in sight at all times. Once you reach the top you will continue along the fence line with a slow, gentle descent along the soft ground at the top. The only thing to be aware of here is that there are a couple of big steps where people used to cut turf! You will have to cross one fence along the route and continue along after this to a left turn at the end of the valley. It is approximately 2 km to the turn from the top of the hill.

STAGE 3

From the turn at the fence you continue along the saddle which descends for the first part and then ramps back up for a climb from approximately 800 feet up to 1800 feet. This is a steep climb on grassy hills which can be slippery when wet. Coming to the end of the climb you are near the top of Leenane valley. Upon reaching the next fence running left you cross over the fence and continue along with the next fence on your left heading out to spot height 556 metres.

This section of the run is quite boggy but you will have to stay close to the fence as visibility up here can change quite quickly. Following the fence out along you will reach the spot height indicated and there perform a U turn to continue back along the way you have just come. You continue back along here until you reach the fence junction where you previously crossed over. You now head out along the edge of the valley on a narrower path until you get to another junction in the fence. Upon reaching this junction you head left and keeping the fence to your right you head down hill into Leenane. This is a good descent if you are happy on bog and slippery ground, if not take your time! After 2km of descent you will get to the end of the fence line and then you will continue to follow the route to the left which will be marked with bamboo with ribbons tied to top.

STAGE 4

This will take you into the back of Leenane where you will come out into a private road and then follow this down to the main road. You will then have to follow the main road around past the Leenane hotel in front of you. This is a dangerous corner so be aware of traffic as you come round the corner on the road. This road section will be about 600m and then you will head back onto the Western Way track. This will be the same surface as previously with stone and grass intermixed. Continue along this until you reach the arrow pointing you up your last hill.

STAGE 5

The last hill will be marked again with bamboos holding ribbons. This route is designed to avoid any cliff faces and follow the best route up the hill. Due to this an weather conditions you are not allowed to make your own way up the hill, to do so will incur a anything from a half an hour penalty to disqualification. You will have to be within 10m and in sight of poles the entire ascent. Once you



XGAELFORCE MOUNTAIN RUN

get near the top you will be able to see a fence with ribbons tied to it, ignore this until you start descending as it is the way down. You continue following bamboo and faint trail to summit cairn.

At cairn you turn right and start heading downhill, this descent is quite tricky underfoot so please be aware of conditions and your skill level in descending. Following the fence down you will again be on a grass/ bog surface that will require concentration to maintain your footing. Be aware of other runners from the shorter race and you are aiming for the Western Way again. Once you hit the Western Way you will turn left and then right immediately as you join back up with the path from earlier. Follow this path back to the Adventure Centre to finish line. 22km, 4500ft of ascent done and dusted.

Please make sure you are aware of the Mandatory Kit List which is extremely important for the Mountain Run.

