



An Post Rás na mBan

ENGLISH

Introduction

This comprehension and writing activity is based around An Post Rás na mBan 2014. The extract focuses on the announcement of the route prior to the event. It is followed by a video depicting the highlights of An Post Rás na mBan 2014, which the students will use to write a report on the race for print or online media.

Comprehension

Read the below comprehension and answer the questions that follow it.

An Post Rás na mBan Route Announced

An individual time trial, a circuit race and a hilly final stage are among the challenges for the competitors in An Post Rás na mBan 2014 following the announcement of the route details today.

Ireland's top international stage race for women will again be based in Ennis, County Clare and will take in the sights of Munster's Atlantic coastline over a total 427km of racing. Following on from the successful first venture to County Clare in 2013, the event will once again be based in the county town of Ennis, with race HQ the Inn at Dromoland.

The race is once again comprised of six stages in five days, from Wednesday 10th to Sunday 14th September, with a variety of stages set to suit the individual characteristics of all road racers.

Teams from USA, UK, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Ireland have already confirmed their participation in the ninth year of the event in its current guise and the 28th annual international women's stage race in Ireland. Detailed team announcements will be made in due course.

Race Director Valerie Considine describes this year's race route as a "logical evolution" of 2013.

"I see this as the perfect use of the fabulous roads available to us in County Clare," says Considine, who takes the reins of Ireland's top women's stage race for a ninth consecutive year.

"During the winter months the organising committee undertook a forensic analysis of last year's event and An Post Rás na mBan 2014 is the result. We surveyed riders, team staff, race organisers, financial partners and local county officials after last year's event and there was overwhelming support for the direction we took the race in 2013. Therefore this year's race has many new challenges for the riders without being a radical change to what was clearly a popular recipe."

"If I had to pick out a highlight, I think the stage two, 'Wild Atlantic Way' stage has all the hallmarks of an epic. It's not a pure mountain stage and it's not totally flat either so it'll draw the maximum number of riders into the fight. Added to that, it takes place in truly beautiful surroundings, with the Atlantic Ocean and the rugged County Clare coast providing the perfect backdrop."

"We have fantastic support from a number of businesses and agencies and I'm delighted to announce that An Post will once again be supporting us for the third year in succession, as title sponsor of Ireland's premier women's stage race. The support of the national postal carrier has made a huge difference to the development of the race in recent years and we're very grateful to all in the GPO for their contribution to the event. Many of our other sponsors have renewed and/or increased their involvement while new supporters have come in to help maintain this event at the level that it is and we'll be making a number of announcements in the coming months regarding this."



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“I believe that Rás na mBan is an integral component in the Irish sport calendar, not just Irish cycling and not just women’s cycling. It’s an event that has carved a niche in Irish and world sport and our committee is working very hard to maintain this level so that it continues to perform an important role in the community.”

The route announced today once again includes six stages in five days with Clare County Council once again providing vital support for the event for the second successive year. The race opens on Wednesday 10th September with a relatively flat 66km opening stage starting at race headquarters, the Inn at Dromoland and finishing in Ennis. The Wild Atlantic Way second stage is an all new road race of 120kms tracing the Atlantic Coast from Loop Head Lighthouse to Ballyvaughan, a stage that is likely to feature splits in the peloton as the rugged and very beautiful topography asks big questions of the riders. A short individual time trial returns this year on stage three which is likely to further shake up the classification while stage four on Friday afternoon is a ten-lap, 40km circuit race to suit the sprint specialists. The penultimate stage is the Beast of the Burren stage, a reworked version of the epic and hugely popular stage which played a big part in the destination of last year’s individual title. The race concludes with an 88km stage starting at the Inn at Dromoland which will finish again in the centre of Ennis, bringing another week of top international racing in County Clare to a close.

Considine is sure that the route strikes the right balance and offers something for every type of stage race rider. “It’s a varied route that packs every different type of challenge into five days of hard racing,” she says. “I’m satisfied that the winner of An Post Ras na mBan 2014 will be a true stage race all rounder.

Quiz

1. What is An Post Rás na mBan?
2. What distance is An Post Rás na mBan?
3. How long has Valerie Considine been the Race Director?
4. How many stages are there in An Post Rás na mBan?
5. How long is the second stage and where does it start and end?
6. How many laps are there in the road race in stage four?
7. What stage takes the cyclists through the Burren?
8. From which countries are teams expected to take part in the race?



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Write your own report

As a class discuss what information is needed in a new report – who, what, when, where and why, etc. Make note of required information on a board/flipchart. Watch the highlights from this year's An Post Rás na mBan on www.anpostschoolbag.ie/secondaryactivities noting important facts that you would need to include in a report after the event. Use these notes to write a post-race report on An Post Rás na mBan for print or online media.

Additional activities

- Write the history of Rás na mBan.
- Imagine you were one of the entrants in An Post Rás na mBan 2014. Use the information about the event to write a diary, with entries detailing information such as: training prior to the event, the event itself and challenges in each stage, the other cyclists (any famous names/faces), the weather, the scenery, etc.
- Role play interviewing entrants to An Post Rás na mBan 2014. You could even film each other doing this.
- **Enter the An Post Handwriting competition. Use any of the writing activities above or get your students to write their own composition in any genre for the theme 'An Post Rás na mBan' or 'The Journey of a Parcel'. For more information visit anpostschoolbag.ie/competition**

Quiz Answers

1. Ireland's top international stage race for women.
2. 427km.
3. 9 years.
4. Six stages.
5. 120kms tracing the Atlantic Coast from Loop Head Lighthouse to Ballyvaughan.
6. 10 laps.
7. Stage 5 (known as the Beast of the Burren).
8. USA, UK, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Ireland.



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Curriculum links

English - Reading

- R1 • Read texts with fluency, understanding and competence, decoding groups of words/phrases and not just single words.
- R3 • Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies appropriate to texts, including digital texts: to retrieve information; to link to previous knowledge, follow a process or argument, summarise, link main ideas; to monitor their own understanding; to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate.
- R12 • Understand how word choice, syntax, grammar and text structure may vary with context and purpose.

English - Writing

- W1 • Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, re-draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate.
- W3 • Write for a variety of purposes, for example to analyse, evaluate, imagine, explore, engage, amuse, narrate, inform, explain, argue, persuade, criticise, comment on what they have heard, viewed and read.
- W4 • Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences.
- W6 • Use editing skills continuously during the writing process to enhance meaning and impact: select vocabulary, reorder words, phrases and clauses, correct punctuation and spelling, reorder paragraphs, remodel, manage content.
- W11 • Use language conventions appropriately, especially punctuation and spelling, to aid meaning and presentation and to enhance the reader's experience.
- W12 • Demonstrate an understanding of how syntax, grammar, text structure and word choice may vary with context and purpose.