

IVCA - Dick O'Brien Leisure League 2018 Round 5- 13th May

The 5th round of the Dick O'Brien Leisure League commenced for the third year at the newly located Cycle Superstore on Airton Road Talaght, with a start time of 9:00 am. The weather forecast was for sunshine with temperatures rising to 18 degrees.

A total of 10 riders signed on for this challenging event which accounted for 9 IVCA members and 1 guest. The route planned was ideal preparation for those taking part in the Wicklow 200 which proves to be an exceptional challenge given the location of the start point and early climbs.



Before setting out the group remembered Gay Farnan (left), Director of the Leisure League who passed away on the 29th March 2017. Gay initiated and set this route some years ago with a start point in the Square Tallaght to help prepare tour riders for the Wicklow 200 in which he played no small part in organising.

After some discussion the group was advised of the safety rules and the route, which for the early part of the tour would be scenic with breathtaking views of the lower Blessington lakes and a planned tea stop in Laragh.

The group set out at a steady pace in the direction of the Belgard Road and Blessington. As the group commenced the ascent up the Blessington Road to Brittas the pace remained constant to ensure the group stayed together. The weather looked promising and everyone was in good spirits.

The group proceeded through Brittas and took the left turn in the direction of Manor Kilbride away from the main traffic and on to the lower lakes. As we made our way towards Blessington the sun was shining brightly on the lakes and the views were breathtaking.

From Blessington we made our way onto the N81 in the direction of Poulaphouca taking in more stunning lake views before continuing to Hollywood where we stopped and took on a few supplies before commencing the first climb of the day.

The climb from Hollywood got the legs moving in slow steady strokes with rising heart rates, as the banter ceased the minds concentrated on the task in hand. The riders began to string out as each found a suitable gear to set a comfortable pace with a view to meeting at the top before commencing the fast descent to the base of the Wicklow Gap.

As we commenced the long ascent to the Wicklow Gap the group began to split with Eamonn and Philip Newton getting away with Brendan Johnson and Denis Haverty in the lead, followed by Evelyn Doyle and the remaining riders. The weather conditions were good with little wind and rising



temperatures, unlike other years when we cycled through the mist and fog with poor visibility to get to the top. The lead group waited at the top of the climb as the remaining riders arrived one by one just in time for a few photos.

With safety in mind it was agreed to leave a time gap between each rider before commencing the 6.6M descent into Laragh. The descent was fast but controlled, with little cross winds and the usual passing traffic.

With the sun shining and the first two climbs of the day complete, all riders arrived safely in Laragh for the well earned Tea Stop. The atmosphere was good with lots of fellow cyclists filling the air with talks of bikes, climbs,

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routes and the usual banter. The group took time to reflect and catch up on events in cycling.



After a very enjoyable tea stop we commenced the approach to the Glenmacnass Waterfall with Philip Brogan taking advantage of a head start and Evelyn Doyle not far behind with the remainder of the group following. As the riders proceeded in the direction of the Waterfall, the relatively flat terrain at the base of the climb provided riders with an opportunity to get their legs moving again. As the gradient gradually increased you could hear the sound of gears changing as riders reached for lower gears in preparation for the climb.

With the sun shining and no noticeable wind, the climb looked inviting. As the road turned we could see the breathtaking view of the waterfall and the top of the climb was in sight.



As the riders reached the top of the waterfall, Eamonn and Philip Newton together with Denis Haverty and yours truly gathered to take a few photos for the record.

The Bullet Brogan had already gone ahead with Evelyn the Flash Doyle not far behind, before we took off in chase Philip Newton topped up his drink with additional fuel (possible rocket fuel) as his performance in the chase across to the Sally Gap would suggest. Not far into the chase, Denis rode up beside Eamonn and whispered something in his ear and that was the last we saw of him as he accelerated like a bat out of hell across the 16k stretch to the Sally Gap.

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As we made our way across to the Sally Gap the remaining riders worked together in chase of the lead riders which we started to reel in. On arrival at the Gap we gathered and took a few more photos for the record. After taking on some refreshments the riders commenced the descent to Manor Kilbride, mindful of the sharp turn at the bridge on the end of the decent with the Bullet Brogan getting away first and Evelyn the Flash Doyle in chase with the remaining riders following, leaving a time gap between each rider.

As the road flattened out the wheel was in sight of the Flash Doyle and the remaining gap was closed quickly with a fast pace set all the way to Manor Kilbride.

At Manor Kilbride we had time to regroup before setting out for the N81 at a steady pace. As we crossed the junction at the N81 the group singled out staying safely together heading in the direction of Brittas and on to the start of our final decent. All riders approach the descent with safety in mind and commenced the decent with a time gap between each rider making our way to the finish at Airton Road.



Tony Pearson