

Carrauntoohil race report by Douglas Barry

As mountains go, Carrauntoohil tops everything else in Ireland. 3,414 feet of muscular sandstone, it pulls itself towards the Kerry sky above its neighbours in the McGillicuddy Reeks. Its steep slopes are not to be taken lightly. A dangerous beast in winter, it has taken the unwary lives of several climbers. But, it has never frightened [John Lenihan](#). The former World Mountain Running Champion Lenihan lives close by on the gentle rolling Stacks Mountains, but his heart lives for his annual joust with Carrauntoohil.

Carrauntoohil and the sickle shaped ridge of its outliers, Caher and Beenkeragh, dominate the view of the western skyline from Lenihan's hillside farm. For ten years, he has won the 8.5 mile race up and down the loose rocky scree to the summit cross and back. Challengers come and challengers go, but the tough Kerryman has rebuffed them all on Ireland's highest mountain.

His formidable record of 71 minutes 43 seconds was set on his very first outing in the race, when, unpressured by any significant opposition, he forced his way up and along the curving Caher ridge in cool windless conditions and into the record books. As the years passed, the Riocht athlete has suffered illnesses and injuries but always managed to stave off his opponents on the day.

History repeated itself this year, when Irish Champion Lenihan shook off a 'flu bug, bad weather, and strong opposition to win the Carrauntoohil for the 11th year in a row. Confounding the pre race pundits who had written him off, the 37 year old Lenihan achieved a feat unlikely to be ever equalled.

Lenihan who had been bedridden earlier in the week, and looked a doubtful starter, defied the best efforts of former Irish champion Francis Cosgrave (Blackrock) and the recent form runner Paul Nolan (Crusaders) to win in a time of 76 minutes 58 seconds, just over 5 minutes outside his own record.

This trio, accompanied in the early stages by Pudsey & Bramley's Shane Green had been together on the initial climb up Caher mountain which leads onto the narrow airy Carrauntoohil ridge. However, as the course steepened, the former World Champion powered ahead, fragmenting the field to reach the summit cross with a comfortable lead.

Cosgrave made the summit in second place after Paul Nolan blew up on the steep rocky climb. Nolan had been rated "the man most likely to" until he woke up with a streaming cold and sore throat on race morning. However, he plugged onwards to 3rd spot in the wake of Cosgrave who made a near suicidal descent to try to peg the gap back on Lenihan. But he couldn't catch the flying Kerry farmer and had to settle for 2nd place for the fourth year in a row.

A clearly delighted Lenihan admitted afterwards that he thought he didn't stand a chance. "I was really flattened during the week, and I thought I'd blow up on the Caher climb. I got up three times with the coughing during last night and had a nip of whiskey each time. And I'm a teetotaler..." It certainly worked for the Riocht man. Next year, win number 12 perhaps!!

Carrauntoohil 2nd race in 7 race Irish Championship

John Lenihan (Riocht) 76-58

Francis Cosgrave (Blackrock) 78.53

Paul Nolan (Crusaders) 83.18

First Woman

Majella Diskin (Riocht) 108.01

First Male Vet 40

Mike McAuliffe (Riocht) 94.01

First Male Vet 50

Bernard Collins (Limerick) 118.24

CARRAUNTOOHIL - Irish Championship race 2 of 7

	Sun.	31/05/98	Weather Mixed		
POS	NUM	NAME	CAT	CLUB	TIME
1	583	John Lenihan		Riocht	76.58
2	402	Francis X. Cosgrave			78.53
3	407	Paul Nolan		Crusaders	83.18
4	411	Shane Green		Pudsey & Bramley	87.12
5	582	Willie Guiney		Desmond Currans A.C.	89.19
6	416	Patrick Devine- Wright		Surrey Univ.	92.46
7	436	Matt Hickmott			96.06
8	412	Pat Murphy	MV	Eagle	104.49
9	403	Majella Diskin	FV	Riocht	108.01
10	428	Vivian O'Gorman	MV		114.40
11	424	Joe Lalor	MV	GEN	115.16
12	838	Donie Shine	MV	Millstreet	116.14
13	444	Adrian Hayes		Bray Runners	117.08
14	440	Bernard Collins	MSV	Limerick	118.24
15	580	Paddy Hegarty	MV	Eagle A.C.	120.56
16	441	David Cronin	MV		122.50
17	425	Thomas Galvin			122.52

18	829	Brian Byrne	MSV	Crusaders	123.12
19	584	Sean Casey		Riocht	127.07
20	415	Joe Laffan	MSV	Limerick	139.58
21	414	Michael Carmody	MV	Listowel A.C.	142.15
22	437	Kim Ging	F		144.39
23	502	Cormac Corrigan		Glenasmole HR	146.19
24	422	Frank Murphy	MV	Glenasmole	146.19
25	510	Gavan Doherty		GEN	146.19
26	413	Paul S Burns	MSV	Ashville Track	182.02
DNF	808	David O'Callaghan		Eagle	Retd
DNF	593	Noel Prendergast			Retd
Short Course - Caher					
1	410	Fergal Fitzmaurice	M18	Ballyduff	74.39

Entries: Douglas Barry, Vivian O'Gorman

Finish Douglas Barry

Results Douglas Barry

Rescue: Thanks everybody who helped !!