

Connaught Mountain Pursuit Challenge

21st - 23rd September 2018

Achill Island, Co. Mayo

Map: Sheet 30

Scale: 1:50,000

Introduction

Achill Island is as far west as you can go in Ireland. For those coming long distances, the final refuelling options are an Applegreen in Mulranney and a Topaz station between Achill Sound and Dooagh.

As you will probably be travelling a good distance to get here, we plan to have the first camp five minutes from check-in, unless the holiday homes here are occupied. The height in Achill will be gained from sea level so it is going to be a tough weekend.

Staff will check route cards and gear thoroughly at check-in to ensure the safety of the team while on the hills. Please take time to familiarise yourself with the route and the bad weather/alternate route outlined at the end of this document. We recommend that you prepare two different route cards, one for each option.

Teams who are ill-prepared will not be allowed take part in the MPC. Teams should plan a healthy and nutritious menu for the weekend and ensure that they have sufficient equipment and gear (and yet keep the weight down!). In particular, come equipped to leave no trace.

Friday Night

F 562 044 to F 558 044 - Park at the upper car park, check in and walk, following the track to low camp. There is good camping here, although the ground slopes. Alternative campsite, if the holiday homes are occupied, is West of the lake at F 547 049.

Saturday

****If necessary, bad weather start, outlined at the end of the document, may replace the next five points to point F 553 058****

F 555 045 to F 558 037 - From low camp travel to the ruined Coastguard Station at F 558 037. The sea cliffs are extremely dangerous, and you must treat them with caution.

F 558 037 to F 544 048 - Follow the track to spot height 332. The track does not follow the cliff edge the entire way and you should follow the track and not the cliff top.

F 544 048 to F 534 056 – Continue following the track to spot height 266. Be sure to take in the views,

but exercise extreme caution at all times.

F 534 056 to F 541 058 – From spot height 266, there is a steep descent down to a stream. You should stay on the well-worn track which handrails the cliff edge on your left. Again, caution is advised.

F 541 058 to F 547 056 – Continue along the track which will turn south east after approximately 400 metres. Follow along for approximately another 500 metres. This is the beginning of the toughest climb of the day. There will be a check-point here at the track end.

F 547 056 - F 553 058 – Take a bearing from check-point to the summit of Croaghaun. This is a very steep and tough ascent so take your time and be sure to zig-zag as you climb. The summit is small, so take care with placing your rucksacks. From here on a clear day you can see the Nephin Begs to the east and Croagh Patrick, Mweelrea, and Clare Island to the south.

F 553 058 to F 559 061 - From the summit, follow the track to Tonacroughaun. Be careful of the sea cliffs to the left of the track. There is a straight drop on your left, please exercise caution and keep a safe distance from the cliff edge.

F 559 061 to F 567 068 - Follow the track to spot height 574m. Be aware of the cliff edge falling away from itself along this track and noticeably on your map at F 565 067 with the obvious loss in height shown by contours and creating a small valley between the old cliff edge and the new cliff edge. If you are going to look at this feature take extreme care.

****if necessary, bad weather route below kicks-in here, and replaces remaining instructions ****

F 567 068 to F 574 074 - From Spot height 574m travel to F 574 074. This is a fairly gradual descent using the cliff as a handrail. Proceed to the top of the gully at F 574 074.

F574 074 to F571 075 - From top of gully to The Big Rock. Take extreme because the descent is very steep. At the bottom of the gully proceed to the big rock at F571 075.

F 571 075 to F 577 085 - From The Big Rock travel on a dog leg to the edge of the re-entrant at F 570 077, and from here take a direct bearing to Lough Nakeeroge F 577 085 and our second campsite. The route down is over featureless ground so take care when following your bearing. There are plenty of good camping sites available here.

Sunday

F 577 085 to F596 073 - From campsite head to the end of the spur at F589 081. From there head to F 595 074, from this point there is a distinct path to the top of the col F596 073.

F596 073 to F 578 058 - From the col contour around to the carpark at Lough Acorrymore F 578 058. Take care to ensure that you maintain height, because the lake and the col are both at the same height. Any height you lose you will have to climb again! Check out will be located at the carpark. From here follow the road back to Keem Strand – we will try to have a few cars to shuttle drivers back for their cars.

***** Bad weather route below *****

This starting route for Saturday avoids the cliff walk and Marconi tower;

F 544 048 to F 548 049 - Ascend from the Friday night campsite to the lake at F 548 049.

F 548 049 to F 554 048 - From the lake ascend directly to the top of Croaghaun. This is a very steep and tough ascent so take your time and be sure to zig-zag as you climb. This is a small summit take care with the placing of your rucksacks. With some luck you will see the Nephin Begs to the east and Croagh Patrick, Mweelrea and Clare Island to the south.

The route is then the same from this point until;

F567 068 to F 574 068 - From Spot height 574m follow a bearing to cliff edge (F 570 066) which overlooks two lakes, one of which will be the site of our high camp. Do not attempt to descend this cliff edge although the end is in sight. Walk North East, using the cliff on your right as a handrail, then swinging East until you reach the check-point.

F 574 068 to F 580 063 – Descend into high camp at Lough Corryntawy which is the smaller of the two lakes. There is excellent camping here. Get some food on and settle down for the night.

Sunday

F 580 063 – F 582 045 – From high camp, head towards Lough Acorrymore. From here follow the road all the way down to road junction.

F 582 045 - F 562 045 – Follow road to the higher car-park enjoying the beautiful views of Keem beach as you get closer to the finish. The sheltered bay is said to have been blessed by Saint Patrick during his stay on Croagh Patrick. According to folklore, Saint Patrick looked out from the mountain and saw the golden beach at Keem and said that no one would ever drown in its waters. Therefore, the brave among us might test the waters blessed by our patron saint.