

## Ironman 70.3 UK-Dave Upton

This was my first ever half ironman and first triathlon of the year, so I was pretty apprehensive about it before leaving home. I shared a lift down with Jase and we camped at a brilliant spot close to the race village and start line - very convenient. Paul Wills and his brother were camping at the overflow camp nearby so we convinced them to move next to us, so it was quite a spectacle to see us picking up their complete tent and "walk" it over to our spot; on the way we went past some of the "elites" and Philip Graves, no less, passed a witty comment to us! Anyway, we soon got into the "vibe" of the place with more than 800 competitors camping which all helped to get into race mode and turn fear into excitement...

Not having had a very good nights sleep mostly due to nerves we woke at about 5:00AM made a quick brew and had some breakfast before making our way over to the transition area to pump up the tyres and make final additions to our transition bags. For those who have never done an ironman, they make you place the things you need for each transition into separate bags so you have to keep your wits about you to make sure you pack the right things in. On race day you can only get someone to add to the bags and not touch them yourself...

Well the race:

Swim:

I was used to mass water starts from doing a number of triathlons but nothing on this scale: there was only 1 wave, i.e. everyone starting together and with about 1500 competitors that's a lot of bodies in the water. Swimming is my slowest

discipline and so I made sure I was at the back to the outside at the start.

Also, having listened to the race briefing, I took the advice to wait 30 secs or so after start gun before trying to swim. This all helped but as always there was the usual argy bargy in the water and you cant avoid getting kicked and having to put up wuth people switching to breastroke, etc. Anyway, I was determined to relax on the swim as its easy to panic, and after reaching the first bouy things had started to settle down. The rest of the swim was pretty ok and I eventually got back after ~55mins. This is slow, but then I knew it would be slow so was not particularlry fazed by it, only too happy to have made the cutoff time. It was great seeing DaveH on the way back to transition area - thanks for your support Dave!

T1:

Helpers were great as they helped whip off my wetsuit and pack it away for me. Put my cycling stuff on and then it was away on the bike.

Bike:

We had driven around the route the night before so I knew this was going to be tough: its not the toughest 70.3 race for nothing! The bike is my strongest discipline but I decided to take it a bit easier as I did not want to overcook it. The first loop was the worse, and 2nd seemed to go pretty quickly although the many hills had taken their toll....

T2:

Transition was pretty smooth and soon out on the run.

Run:

This ended up being a shocker for me: quite soon after the start I got cramps

in my legs so had to try and walk it out. Each time I tried to start running they would come back again so was reduced to walking virtually the whole of the first lap. I was really furious as I felt ok if it wasn't for these flippin pesky cramps! I am prone to cramping and so I had come prepared with some anti cramp tablets I was taking whilst on the bike so I popped some more of those and started taking bananas and water at the water stops. This seemed to help and was able to start running again, but was cautious not to push it too hard up the hills as I could feel the twinges returning. So for me, this was going to be a really poor run time...Well eventually the 3rd lap came and went and it was over the finish line! YES! I had done it!

I was happy with my time of about 7:06 but would have easily taken 10-15mins off without them cramps...

Lessons learnt:

I really had not done enough running training for this event: this was partly due to an injury I've been nursing and also just time for training. I would really recommend you do brick training sessions as that is the key to doing a long distance triathlon: your legs need to learn to run when they are already tired. I had done no bricks at all before this event and it showed.

For those of you looking for a challenge this is a good event. Its quite a big step up from a normal olympic distance triathlon and its such a beautiful venue and well organised, a definat must, and camping is the way to go....

NOTE: 2011 bookings will be opening this week 23rd June. Get in quick as it will fill up after only a few days. Last year it filled in just 4 days.

GO ON - YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO!