

Hi all, the first of the three race reports from Ironman lanzarote.

First things first that was by far the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, anyway the report-

We arrived 8 days in advance to give us time to acclimatise and do some pre race training. Most mornings we completed a lap of the swim course, we had one 3 hr cycle and a few shorter rides with some light runs thrown in for good measure. The day before was complete rest with a big pasta dinner.

Race day – As people were coming out of the nightclub opposite transition we were gearing up for the race, a very strange nervous atmosphere. Everyone gathered in the swim start area waiting for the off. At 06:40 all relaxed and chilling, but all of a sudden the local radio DJ announced 1 minute to go, where had that 19 mins gone?

3.8 KM Swim – The gun went off and 1572 lunatics ran into the flat calm sea at 7 o'clock in the morning for a two 1.9km lap swim. The usual arms and legs everywhere, trying to find clear water. The second lap wasn't much better, still fighting for clear water although actually swimming at a fast pace. My swim time 1 hr 10mins.

180 KM Bike – A very scenic, hot, hilly tour of the whole island. The route went through lava fields, up the side of volcanoes, through what only can be described as dessert like terrain and then up two very steep hills. Total ride climb 2550M and I felt every single metre. Nutrition seemed to go well with plenty of aid stations on the route to top up fluids. A very technical course with plenty of switchbacks and steep climbs but enjoyable all the same. My ride time 6 hr 33mins.

The marathon!!! – The route consisted of one 21km loop and two 10.5 km loops. The first half of the run went well, felt comfortable. Again plenty of aid stations and well organised. The mid afternoon sun beating down and very hot (30 degs C) but no major issues and my time for the first half was just under 2hrs. A couple of km's into the second half it all went wrong in a big way. Jelly legs, dizzy, blurred vision, light headed and strong urge to empty my stomach, all at the same time and without warning. Fortunately I was only 200m (guess) from an aid station. Aid stations became my targets and I then limped around the next 12 km's trying to put as much water in my body as possible whilst walking to survive. I was eventually able to start drinking energy drinks and with 5km's to go it felt like somebody turned the switch back on and of I ran. My run time 5 hr 27.

I am more than happy with my time and completing the event but still wondering what happened. Was it nutrition, heat stroke or both and was it the fact that I was pushing too hard – who knows. The whole event was well run and organised and with plenty of support from the locals, family and friends - Job done.

Total time 13 hrs 23 mins - IRONMAN

Catch you all soon

Tony

Hi All,

You've had Tony's race report; time for instalment two.

As mentioned and utilising the Military Exercise caveat we arrived in Lanzarote with 8 days for acclimatisation. Arrival day saw the team mechanic (me) assemble and check over gears, etc. The best phase began on Saturday when we could officially begin fat loading for 4 days, before switching to carb loading for the final 3 days prior to the race. Some took the fat loading a lot further than others. The villa pool provide use full for cooling off after some training sessions, head coach I have managed to get my stroke count down to 1.5 per length. Anyway on to race day.

Race day began with reveille at 0430, with breakfast at 0500 (champions breakfast of porridge). We departed the villa at about 0530 for the walk to transition to ensure we arrived with sufficient time for chip activation at 0615. Early arrival at transition allowed for a final bike check and the obligatory toilet visit(s). There was an uneasy calm/silence over transition only disturbed by the chavs on holiday shouting obscenities from the pub balconies. We met up for the final good lucks as we waited for the gun to start.

Before we realised we were running down the beach towards the Atlantic Ocean. The swim can only be described as 2 x 1900m horizontal boxing matches. This melee must suit my swim style as I pb'd the 2.4mile swim with a 01:13:52.

The beauty of Ironman events that there is no requirement for sub 1 minute transitions, you have enough time for a chat, brew, bacon roll (if only they had a burger van in transition). Anyway T1 was the chance to have the volunteer smoother me on a very high factor sun screen, particularly being Scottish and allergic to sunlight. It was a long old way from swim exit to bike out, which wasn't included in the over all race distance.

The start of the bike always seems to fly by, which was probably helped by the overcast/cloud cover; it looked like my live sacrifice to the Scottish God of Rain/Drizzle had worked. Unfortunately the Lanzarote sun decided to show at about the 75km mark and heat everything up just in time for the two big climbs. For those that haven't been to Lanzarote when the sun puts in an appearance the wind picks up and gets stronger the warmer it gets. I don't know if it was with my warm weather training camp in the flat Scottish Highlands, but the climbs didn't seem as bad as everyone was making them out to be, got up fairly easy on a 39/25. A bit of a long stop at the special needs station to help out another competitor who had double punctured and run out of CO2 gas canisters; and enjoy Sam's homemade chocolate brownie and again apply yet more high factor sun screen. Finished the bike in a comfortable 07:12:38.

T2 was a again a fairly relaxed affair, where the volunteer (a Viking) applying the yet more high factor sun screen also massaged my legs to help in preparation for the run/walk/crawl (all recognised methods according to WTC (Ironman) rules).

Out on to the marathon the first lap was a 21km run walk (for those not aware I have a kink in the artery of my right leg which cause numbness in pushed too hard/continuous running). Although knowing it was a long first lap the turn round point was one of those at the end on continuous twist and turn paths (thought I would never find it). The second lap (10.5km) the heat of the day was beginning to take its toll, which resulted in longer walking sections. The final lap helped by a mix of water, bananas, and orange wedges in ice water I was able to pick up the pace again. Overall the marathon was slightly slower than I managed at Ironman UK, however, managed a 05:02:30.

Overall finished my third Ironman and the hardest Ironman in the world in 13:46:19; Ironman number 3 bagged now time to start planning the next.

Enjoy

Baz