

Dear All

A little later than some of the others but please see below for my report on Ironman UK.

The days leading up to the event were my worst of the previous 8 months training. Over that 8 month period my training revolved around ensuring I did something 6 days a week but with the taper came time to think more about the race, negative thoughts crept in. To be honest I know I was hell to live with for the last 2 weeks (sorry Alice, I'll make it up to you!).

The journey up to Bolton on Friday evening was horrible, traffic was murder. Just what was needed to keep me calm, a 4 1/2 drive! Oh well we were there and it was time to get my head on. Registration, racking and the safety briefing came and went with no hassle and it was time for bed. 7 hours later it was 2.00am and race day.....

The Race 140.6 Miles

Race target time: Hoping to do around 13 1/2 hours

The Swim 2.4 Miles

Mass start at 6.00am. Never my strong point but I was comfortable about being easily inside the 2 hour 20 minute cut-off. I personally felt that the water was colder than Wimbleball, it was definitely far dirtier! Anyway a decent if uneventful swim spent about 90% of it drafting a kind if slightly unaware fellow competitor. Out of the water after 1 hour and 40 mins at approx. 7.40am (according to the intermediate time on the heart monitor which was 6 minutes fast). The swim time attributed to me on the results stated a 1 hour 53 minute swim but that was with a faulty chip (I'll explain more later).

T1

Uneventful, although unlike Wimbleball I took full advantage of the 'wetsuit removal service' offered by the kind American lady waiting with a big smile on her face. The marshals were absolutely amazing all day! Anyway within a handful of minutes I was on the bike leg, my favourite part of the race (apart from the finish).

The Bike 112 Miles & T2

I had a really good ride at Wimbleball in June and the bike training since then had gone really well so I was fairly confident of posting a good time. I was aiming for a sub 6 hour ride. The course was pretty much flat up to the lap timing mats so it was easy going for the first 16 miles or so, the only problem was that I was cold. This cold feeling soon went after the first rip up the hill! However I have been suffering with a neck and shoulder ache since the race. The remainder of the first lap and indeed the majority of the second lap went by fairly quickly and uneventful until for some reason going up a slight incline I preceded to clip my pedal on a curbside.....On my way down to the pavement the thought going through my head was "how much is this going to hurt?" the answer "quite a lot". Fortunately for me I was able to get my arm out in time and cushion the fall with my hand without damaging my wrist. Unfortunately in T1 I had decided to not wear any gloves! The result a good deal of blood and skin on the path and a good

deal of blood, skin and gravel in my hand and on my bars, brilliant. I later found out that what also must have happened here is that I damaged the timing chip and the strap. Anyway after I had brushed myself down and sheepishly told a couple of passers by that I was okay I got on with the remainder of the second lap. The third lap flew by and I was still feeling strong, I guess the crash had wound me up and made me push harder. Before I knew it I was turning right at the timing mats to go to Rivington school, the final mile and my time was really good! The only problem being that somewhere between the final lap and where I was now my timing chip had come off the velcro strap. I panicked, as I rode into T2 I spoke to the first marshal I could who sent me onto a second. I was directed to a 'bike grabber' and told to follow another marshal into the school hall. The situation was explained to the young lady there who just told me to go and get ready for the run. After a couple of minutes I was ready for the run and the young lady came over, it was at this point that the faulty chip was explained to me. All of the times that I had passed through timing points from the start had been logged but for some reason no timings were available. Then the bizarre thing happened, the young lady asked me that because of that did I want to continue? I have no idea why she asked this but thought about it for about a second before giving my answer. Anyway approx time on the bike computer 5 hours 43 minutes at an average speed of 19.6 mph. On to the marathon.

The Run 26.2 Miles

Just like Jason this was my first ever marathon. In fact since early May due to my knee problem I had only managed to run about 50 miles so I knew this was going to be tough and I knew like Wimbledon it would take me a long time. Fortunately for me I had a sizeable amount of time to try and get inside my target time! Surprisingly I started off well covering the first off road section fairly quickly for me. This positive start came to a slight halt at the point where I picked up my first of three bands (to say I had done the distance) as the sun decided to come out and bake me! This made continuous running difficult so I resorted to walking, running and the ironman shuffle. This was to be the strategy that I would adopt throughout most of the run to get me to the finish line. Pretty much all along the 7 1/2 mile route from the first turnaround point to the finish there was a huge amount of support from Bolton onlookers, even if I couldn't understand them. At one point as I was going up a slight hill there was a really positive comment from a young lad "you're supposed to be running mate", thanks I'd forgotten for a minute I said. I couldn't say what I really thought! When I got to the finish for the first time it was nice to see friends and family encouraging you, but that nice feeling went as soon as I got my second band and turned my back on the finish! Only 15 miles to go! The next 7 1/2 miles were the hardest of the day most of the miles were walked. I stopped at every feed station, a cup of water, a cup of semi flat coke and a piece of banana were the things that got me to the final turnaround point. With the white band securely on my wrist it was time to head for the finish only 7 1/2 miles to go, just a bit more than a 10k run that can't be too hard can it? Well it was fairly hard but I knew I was nearly there and the shadows were getting longer making the evening cooler so it was a relatively pleasant experience all the way to the top of the hill about a 1/4 from the line. From that point to the red carpet the pain seemed to go, I think I almost bounced along. I got on to the carpet and looked everywhere for Alice, eventually I saw her and my mum, I had a quick look at the clock and said to myself "I could still get inside 13 hours even if I do stop for a kiss". One cuddle, one kiss and 20 yards later I was an ironman! Sorry mum but you got the kiss after the finish. Approx time 5 hours and 34 minutes.

Total time: 12 hours, 57 minutes and 14 seconds (started at 6.00am and finished at 6.57pm and 14 seconds)

Thanks

Alice - for putting up with me for the last 8 months while I have had my training head on.

Alice - for helping me eat the right things.

My sons Harvey and Stanley - ditto.

My Mum for being there on race day even though you didn't really understand why it was such a big deal!

Anyone who has encouraged me be it through training or on race day.

What to do now?

Spending more time with Alice, Harvey and Stanley.

Concentrate on being a dad for the third time (due around November).

Resting and getting my knee better and any other parts of my body that have decided to ache since the race.

Oh and entering Challenge Roth 2011 and / or the Forestman 2011.

Cheers

Paul