

Little Beaver, near Grantham

Stats are:

Finished Overall: 407th

Finish in Age Group: 20th

Race No: 165

Name: NICOLA FLEMING (if you didn't know)

Age Group Category: F30-34 (I know you all thought I was 21!)

Club: Andover Triathlon Club (Big cheer)

Swim time: 00:28:30 (including a 400m run up a hill)

T1: 00:01:11

Bike: 01:24:12

T2: 00:01:32 - (I messed this up - see notes!)

Run: 00:55:40 357 (shocking time, don't mention it when you next see me - although I do feel better that everyone seemed to struggle on the run)

Overall time: 02:51:07 (not quite what I was aiming for, but then the first girl in my age group finished in 02:29:13, which reflects the course & harsh weather conditions).

I arrived the day before, registered, worked out transition, walked/drove the courses & then tried to keep relaxed.

My main concern the night before was that I was doing my first Olympic distance, and keen to set myself a challenge I am trying to qualify for the World Champs for my age group. All I kept asking myself is "am I totally insane or just a little over ambitious?" But then my motto is to aim high - it's that old phrase "reach for the moon and you'll land in the stars :-)". But still BIG gulp - what am I letting myself in for?

The story in brief:

The swim - the water was full of sludge...I would say cow waste (I'm being polite), it was disgusting!!! But never mind, 2 laps had to be completed. My start was weak, but I eventually got going and managed to draft off someone for the second lap, settled into a good pace and even started to vaguely enjoy the swim. I was out quickly and managed to get my wetsuit off for the run up the hill without too much trouble.

T1 was my best transition yet. Thanks Howell! I was off and out in no time.

Bike - 2 laps of an undulating course, which Peter described in his email.

Considering cycling is my weakest discipline, I really enjoyed this course, undulating, one challenging hill and a lot of fun. I knew I would be about 10mins off the pace and compared with my fellow age groupers this was spot on.

T2 was shocking, I completely forgot which row my bike was racked in and then despite putting my running shoes on in lightening quick time (due to new & very loose elastic laces - thanks Charlotte for that tip), I then ran towards the bike out rather than the run out. What an idiot!!! (And a lesson to us all)

The run - I was cold, and my legs would not move - excuses, excuses. The hill that Peter referred to in his report was Steep with a capital S...and I ran the worst 6 miles of my life. The view at the top was amazing though, let's say no more.

So, I have completed my first Olympic triathlon and it was great fun, despite the impression I am trying to create in this report. I really enjoyed it and I'm looking forward to the next one. I managed to beat some other girls who like me have ambitions of going to the World Champs in my age group (so I didn't make a complete fool of myself) and I have lots to improve upon for next time.

I have to mention Sam Wilson, who trains with us occasionally, she won her age group (F20-24) with a storming race - well done Sam 02:31:44 - Brilliant!

For anyone considering an Olympic distance event, this race is really well organised from pre race info to delivery on the day. The race officials & volunteers were really friendly and the location is beautiful.

See you all training soon, most likely swimming on Sunday.

All the best,

Nikki