

I too recently did a middle distance, the Vitruvian on Saturday 5 September. This had been the focus of my training for about 6 months and I'm delighted to say I completed 1.9km/ 85km/21km in 5'48.

The event is popular 1000 participants, and sold out early and justifiably so. It is well organised and marshalled, with just a couple of niggles. One small niggle was the closure of transition prior to the race briefing at 6am, which left me hopping about in my wetsuit unable to fiddle reassuringly with my transition layout for 45 minutes until my wave started. The other niggle was a bit bigger as we shall see.

The swim was in Rutland Water, a gorgeous setting. I set off in a 200 strong wave as the sun rose. In previous starts (eg Windsor) I have had such an adrenalin rush my arms have felt totally wrecked after about 200m this time I was determined to relax not race. Amazingly this worked. The wave spread out and I found some space out on the right of the pack, perhaps taking a slightly longer route on the anti-clockwise course but feeling good. One buoy called for a 270' turn and there was a bit of a crush there but nothing too dramatic. Out after 950m for a 30m skip along the beach and back in. The waves were starting 10 minutes apart and on my timing estimate I would have hit the end of my lap 1 just as the last wave started, however I was doing a little better and managed to get past the start area before they started. Continued to feel good on the second lap, but navigation was a little wonkier; on the shore in 36'10, a couple of minutes quicker than my target.

Through transition without any real problems (had shirt and number under the wetsuit already) other than trying to force wet feet into socks and out on the cycle. T1: 2'26.

The cycle was tough two laps of an undulating rectangular course with a gale blowing giving a head wind on two sides of the rectangle. The Rutland Ripple (three rolling hills) was a taste which I did not fully acquire. It seemed quite busy out on the course nice to have company with cyclists mostly passing me, but me taking the odd one. There was also a lot of vehicular traffic and I wondered why the race was not held on Sunday. Back to T2 in 2'56. Target time 3 hours.

I had my feet out of the cycle shoes before entering transition, ditched the helmet, pulled on my runners and scorched T2 in 1'08.

I knew I just had to hold it together on the run to go sub 6hrs, my secret goal. The course was two out and back legs and I did the first 5.25km in 30mins. Cripes I was on for a half marathon PB. Or not. I slowed down and the next 5kms came and went in 35mins. It was tough finishing the first out and back because the turn around for the second lap was yards from the finish kite and you could hear as you drew near the announcer giving the finishers all the love but not for me, not yet. I was really struggling and grabbed a banana, a gel and some energy drink from a feed station, and a delicious jelly baby from a 4 yr old spectator offering them to runners, and staggered on. This leg was the toughest, out into the headwind again. A guy passed me and I put my head down and stuck on his heels, finally the turn around again only 5kms to go. I slowed for a little walk and a couple of jaffa cakes. The same guy said come on and I followed him again, finally feeling a bit stronger, moving past him and running through to the finish in 2'11.

Fantastic done in 5'48.

The organisers have a brilliant system where you can get your timing slip printed as soon as your finish, so I got my results and headed off with my brother in law to a great pub nearby for a well earned pint of Black Sheep.

So, what's the niggle? The provisional results came out minus my name so I contacted the organisers. Some sort of timing chip issue apparently. Well I had the times from the slip so I sent it through, only two weeks later ie yesterday to be told that in fact I was DQed for dangerous riding. Apparently I overtook a car, crossing onto the far side of the road. I can't actually recall this, but it seems pretty harsh after 6 months training and 6 hours racing to be DQed for overtaking a car which must as you can tell from my not exactly smoking bike split have been near stationary, especially as there doesn't actually seem to me to be anything wrong with going into the other lane to go round a car. I have suggested this to the organisers and the final verdict is out, but I'm not that hopeful.

So there you have it!!

Cheers

Andrew