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GUEST INTERVIEW

EVAN LYNCH

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GUEST INTERVIEW EVAN LYNCH

IRONMAN NUTRITION 101 LEARN TO FUEL LIKE THE PROS DO

Introduction

My name is Evan, I am a qualified dietitian and a sports nutrition specialist, I primarily work with endurance athletes, with the bulk of my clients competing in marathons, triathlons, road cycling events & Ironman triathlons. I work with athletes of all varieties, including some Olympic athletes, professional runners, cyclists and track athletes and a wide range of elite athletes from sports ranging from rugby to motocross. I have been fortunate enough to work extensively with Athletics Ireland & DCU Athletics, and have done some work alongside both Cycling & Triathlon Ireland.

The Ironman

The ultimate endurance challenge, it's not just one foot in front of another, it's managing three disciplines, each of which requires a different focus, each of which offers up a different challenge. It's keeping your composure, it's managing the conditions, it's having your plans in place and it's an endurance challenge all in one. An ironman triathlon is one of the longest mass participation events on earth, with finishing times ranging from 8 to 14 hours for the most part depending on the level of the athlete.

During an ironman triathlon, calorie outputs vary from 7500 to 11000 calories depending on a number of variables, including intensity, gender, weight & age for the most part. This level of calorie output is incredibly difficult to meet, and for the most part, focus is directed to ensuring carb, sodium and fluid intake levels are replaced as best possible. There is much variance in terms of nutritional management in the ironman event, with ironman athletes being particularly prone to misguided or suboptimal tactics & protocols. This is clear when you look at a breakdown of nutrient intakes ranges during the course of an ironman, carb intake through the event varies from 250 to 1300g, with fluid intake varying from 40 to 70ml/kg on average & sodium intakes ranging from approx. 500 – 2400mg.

Hydration

The first goal of a sports nutritionist or dietitian working with an ironman athlete is to make sure that sweat losses are replaced as effectively as possible, or minimized via cooling tactics – keeping sweat losses to less than 2% can preserve performance to the utmost. As sweat losses build up, core temperature increases and lactate is made at earlier points, it is said that even 1% dehydration can drop aerobic performance by 10%, and raises your core temperature by 0.25 degrees Celsius, so for any athlete, conducting a sweat test or having a drinks strategy can yield dividends – the average athlete can consume approx. 500-600ml/hr comfortably, however practice results in better tolerance. When we are looking at hydration during an ironman, it is important to bear in mind that replacing fluids only can result in a dangerous drop in serum sodium levels, owing to a condition known as exercise associated hyponatraemia, which can result in confusion, arrhythmia, cramping, headaches & even coma or death in severe cases.

IRONMAN NUTRITION 101 - LEARN TO FUEL LIKE THE PROS DO

Replacing only water means that the electrolytes levels (which drops via sweat losses) further dilutes the electrolytes that remain in circulation, so it is important that isotonic drinks, electrolyte tablets or even a pinch of salt be used in drinks hourly to avoid this issue. Base line fluid requirements are approx. 35ml/kg/day.



Fats or carbs?

The second goal of a sports nutritionist working with an ironman athlete would be to ensure that glycogen levels are stabilized and are prevented from running out. Whilst the common consensus is that in an event such as an ironman, fat oxidation may be the best course of action, due to the lower intensities and huge calorie requirements of the event. This however, is misguided & will result in poorer performances, with an increased likelihood of gastric issues occurring. When we look at what the research indicates about fat versus carbohydrate usage during exercise, it becomes crystal clear that getting to grips with using carb gels, powders & isotonic drink in training & racing scenarios may be the best bet for optimal performance. When we compare fat fuelled exercise versus carb fuelled exercise, here's the deal: fat is about 15% less efficient to burn, fat oxidation peaks at 65% VO₂max & as lactate builds up over time, L-carnitine's ability to shuttle fats into your cells diminishes. For brass tax exercise feels harder, recovery times are longer and finish times tend to be slower in those who are fat versus carb fuelled.

Carbs during training

So without further ado, let's look at carbohydrates, most ironman athletes will need somewhere in the region of 60-90g per hour during training or racing on top of a baseline carbohydrate intakes of approx. 5g/kg/day to ensure optimal performance & recovery. Ideally you would aim to use products that have a 2:1 ratio of maltodextrin:fructose, most commercial brands will have this, the reason this is important is two fold – in your intestinal tract you can absorb 60g/hr of maltodextrin or other glucose monomers per hour via the SGLT pathway, and approx. 30g fructose per hour through the GLUT5 pathway, this is why the 2:1 ratio exists.

It is important to note also that high fructose loads alone are poorly absorbed for the most part, and that the presence of maltodextrin is vital for tolerance. When we are looking at how we fuel during events, my go to method is to always lay down a fluid foundation – this basically means that you want to get the bulk of your carbs in from liquid sources, which is particularly easy in the pre-race phase, on the bike & is manageable during the run phase. This is due to the fact that liquids are tolerated better than gels, energy bars, chews etc. My go to recommendations would be High5 energy, SIS Beta Fuel or Maurten 320.

IRONMAN NUTRITION 101 - LEARN TO FUEL LIKE THE PROS DO

Tummy issues

Goal number three for a sports nutritionist working with an ironman athlete would be to prevent gastric issues occurring during races and in training. GI distress is very common in endurance athletes, with the most common symptoms being diarrhoea, an urgency to use the bathroom and stomach pain. GI distress during exercise is almost completely preventable. The usual suspects for stomach issues in exercise are dehydration or recent consumption of foods high in fibre or fat, in some cases for those with sensitive stomachs or gastric conditions, the consumption of foods high in FODMAPs may result in problems. The intestinal tract loses a lot of its' function and blood supply during exercise, even at low intensities, dehydration amplifies this effect, as it warrants more blood being directed to the surface of your skin to help keep you cool, i.e. further reducing the supply to your intestines, further dropping function. Second to this, if there are food elements that are partially digested (fibre and fat can take up to 9hrs) or foods with a high osmotic load, drawing water into the intestinal tract (high salt foods, sugar alcohols etc.) you might be likely to experience some nasty side effects, as previously mentioned due to malabsorption & incomplete digestion. The easiest way to avoid this is to keep your meals in the 3-4 hours pre exercise nice & simple, as in the training session summary which is coming up shortly.

Day to day management

If we are looking at some day to day aspects of your race preparation, trying to balance a job, life, family and other commitments with the massive commitment that is taking on an ironman, there are some things we would do well to pay attention to, to help keep you healthy & happy as you prepare for your big day:

- 1) Don't skip meals, if you have no time, meal prep, get a meal delivery service or pick healthy options in shops, deli counters etc. (wholemeal wraps with protein & veggies), yogurt pots, fruit pots, microwave rice, smoothies etc. are all excellent options.
- 2) Get your supplements in check, I often note that the pro's I work with have a much easier time than everyone else who is trying to juggle many balls at any given moment – making sure you have your vitamin D in check, maybe a probiotic, possibly a ZMA supplement and even some creatine can go a long way in giving you the best shot of consistently showing up.
- 3) Have a training framework that you know you can easily do, I have outlined one a little later on that will make managing your training & recovery an awful lot simpler. Being able to get carbs in within a 20min window post workout results in a dramatically superior recovery rates.
- 4) Make sure you are not digging too far into the well with lots of fasted training or big amounts of calorie restriction, flat lining your glycogen levels or pushing for aggressive weight loss will make performance a challenge. This is something to figure out with the help of a professional.
- 5) Be aware that you are not normal, in the sense that your requirements are way higher than that of a sedentary person, in particular omega 3, calcium, vitamin D, B vitamins, magnesium & sodium, all of which you consume and use more of as your training hours stack up.
- 6) Get your protein numbers met as best possible, aiming for approx. 1.6g/kg/day to help you maximize muscle protein synthesis. You want even feedings throughout the day (getting 20-25g servings every 3hrs or so), from high biological value sources (eggs, meat, dairy, fish etc.) or full compliments if you are plant based (tofu, soya, rice & beans, peas & corn, lentils & pulses etc.).
- 7) Stop trying to eat clean and don't follow fads, in the world of nutrition, there are a lot of myths and pervasive beliefs. There is no set diet an athlete has to follow, a moderate amount of "junk food" is okay and you don't (shouldn't) avoid carbs.

IRONMAN NUTRITION 101 - LEARN TO FUEL LIKE THE PROS DO

Training framework

Below is the training framework I would use with my clients, and it encompasses the majority of what you would need or want to do in and around a training session or race – the inside scoop is that your key session on any given week would be exactly what you intend to do on race day. It's not that racing is different, you just may need to carb load in advance.

Time	Food
3hrs pre session	Low fibre, low fat, high carb meal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Baked potato with mixed beans- Pancakes with maple syrup- Large bowl cereal
90mins pre session	High carb + caffeine: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Americano + banana- Caffeine gel- Coffee + brioche roll
During session	Carbs, sodium & fluid: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Isotonic sports drink (High5/Maurten/SIS)- Electrolyte tab or pinch salt- Energy gels- Protein bar or amino acids if session >3hrs
Post workout (within 20mins)	High GI carbs + protein: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Protein milk + banana- Coco pops + whey protein- Bagel with PB & J
Within 2hrs post workout	Balanced meal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pasta bake with salmon- Stir fry with chicken & veg- Homemade pizza with veg toppings

Need some help?

Nutrition is a unilateral weak point in the sporting community, from couch to 5k runners to seasoned Olympians, I have yet to work with an athlete who did not have room for improvement on the nutrition front, which is encouraging, as it means paying attention to this will likely yield dividends in terms of improving performance in training and races. If you find nutrition confusing, don't know where to start or feel a bit overwhelmed in the face of the contradictory information you find online, get in touch, I can help you.

I take an educational approach with anyone I work with, and aim to help athletes find a sustainable framework to help them manage their nutrition around their needs, lifestyle and goals. Ideally, when we are done working together, you won't need to see a nutritionist or dietitian again, as you'll be all set. You can find me on Instagram [@elynychfitnut](#) or get in touch on my website at www.evanlynchfitnut.com to find out more, I have an online consultation clinic and an online nutrition coaching program, the majority of my clients are cyclists, triathletes & marathon runners. You can use **TRILOGY10** to get **10%** off online coaching spots. Happy trails,

E



WINTER TRAINING

BY TRILOGY COACHES

EIMEAR MATHEWS, MICK SCULLY & DENISE MURPHY

Winter time is a great opportunity to build a foundation for the next racing season. With the summer races finished it can also be a time where triathletes may choose to focus on one particular discipline that they feel needs improvement and warrants spending more time in training than the others. The extra time spent might be on improving technique as well as building fitness. The winter can also be an opportunity to spend more time building up strength and condition, this is very beneficial for preventing injuries as well as improving performance.

We asked the individual coaches of the three disciplines to give us some guidance for winter training. We hope the following information will be useful for you:

Eimear Matthews advises swimming at least twice a week during the winter season, swimming 1.5km to 2km in each session.

The following plan can be adjusted according to your level of fitness, particularly the rest intervals:

Swimming

WEEK 1	Warm Up	Technique/Drills	Main Set	Cool Down
Session 1	400m	10 x 100m (drill 50m, swim 50m)	4 x 200m easy pace 15 sec RI 1 x 300m	4 x 50m easy Total: 2700m
Session 2	200m	Drill 50m swim 100m Drill 75m swim 75m Drill 100m swim 50m Drill 50m swim 100m	10 x 100m at CSS 20 sec RI	2 x 250m easy Total: 2300m
Session 3	400m	8 x 50m drills	3 x 200m 3 rd & 6 th hard 10 x 50m every 2 nd hard 5 x 100m 2 nd hard. 15 sec RI	300m easy Total 2700m
Session 4	200m	400m drills	2 x 200m 15RI 1 x 300m 20RI 1 x 400m 30RI 1 x 300m 20RI 2 x 200m 15RI 80% Pace.	200m easy Total 2600m

WINTER TRAINING



WEEK 2	Warm Up	Technique/Drills	Main Set	Cool Down
Session 5	300M	12 x 100m Alternate swim and drill	6 x 200m. Alternate 200m swim and 200m torpedo kick 10m and swim to end of pool.	300m easy Total 2400m
Session 6	300m	300m drills	4 x 100m 20RI 1 x 200m " 4 x 100m " Repeat twice, 2min rest between 1 st & 2 nd set	300m Easy Total 2900m
Session 7	400m	400m Alternate 100m swim 100m drill	2 x 200m 15RI 4 x 100m 20RI 8 x 50m 25RI 1 x 200m Building pace to a fast 200m finish.	300m easy
Session 8	300m	500m drills	1 x 400m 20 RI 2 x 200m " 4 x 100m " 2 x 200m " 1 x 400m "	200m Easy Total 3000m
WEEK 3	Warm Up	Technique/Drills	Main Set	Cool Down
Session 9	400m	16 x 50 Alternate drills and swim	10 x 50m every 2 nd set hard. 20sec RI 5 x 100m pace with technique. 1 min RI Repeat the above.	200m Easy Total 3000m
Session 10	250m	550m drills.	2x100m CSS 20sec RI 1 x200m " " 1x 300m " " 2 x200m " " 1 x200m " " 2 x100m " "	2 x 250m Easy Total 2800m
Session 11	300m	900m drills Alternate 150m drill 150m swim	8 x 200m. Every 2 nd length hard for 6 sets, 15 sec RI Last two sets all hard effort. 2 min RI	200m Easy Total 3000m
Session 12	400m	8 x 200m. Drill with fins 200m Pull 200m.	2 x 400m 80% 1 min RI	200m Easy Total 3000m

Eimear also provided us with the a schedule of dry land strength and conditioning sessions that can be done during the winter to build the foundation for next seasons swimming.

Continue reading for these sessions

WINTER TRAINING



WEEK 4	Warm Up	Technique/Drills	Main Set	Cool Down
Session 13	400m	10 x 100m Alternate swim and drill	6x 200m 1 BP left only 2 BP right only 3 BP 3 and 5 4 BP head up for 1st 10 strokes of each length. 5 & 6 BP 3	2 x 200m Easy Total 3000m
Session 14	400m	400m drills	4 x 100m CSS – 5sec 40RI 2 x 200m “ “ 4 x 100m “ “ 2 x 200m “ “ 2 x 100m “ “ 1 x 400m “ “	200m Total 3000m
Session 15	300m	500m 10 x 50m swim 50m drill.	1 x 400m RI 1 min 80% 1 X 200m “ “ 1 x 400m “ “ Repeat once.	200m

We are delighted that our winter swimming sessions with Eimear are back on the schedule again for Thursday nights. Eimear also does Zoom classes throughout the winter in Strength & Conditioning and Spinning. You can contact her directly to find out more about these.

Do neach 8 exercises below for 40 sec, after you have completed the 8, take 30 seconds rest, repeat this 2 more times. Do all the below with good posture

S&C for Swimming			
Week 1		Week 2	
Monday	10 min WU, jog on the spot, jumping jacks, marching, swing the arms, etc. Pressups, on knees or feet, for upper body strength Plank on elbows, replicates good body position for swimming Side Plank, alternating sides, Core and body position Glut Bridges, strong gluts and hamstrings Squats, strong legs Reverse Lunge, strong legs With light weights, Bicep curls. Tricep push backs, strength improves speed Stretch	Monday	10min WU as week one Forward Lunge Russian twists Plank Wall sit Kneel down on both knees, stand up, no hands Bicep curls Tricep curls Skaters Stretch
Thursday	10min Warm Up as above. Plank on hands Leg Raises Flutter kick Superman Sit ups Squats Jump side to side Side Lunges Stretch	Thursday	10min Warm Up as week 1 Plank on hands, tap opposite shoulder Mountain climbers Bird, dog Alternating Superman Dead bug running Squats Hopping or skipping Overhead press Stretch

WINTER TRAINING



If you are new to strength and conditioning, start with one set of each exercise for 30seconds with 20 sec rest, and progress to 3 sets for 50sec with 10sec rest.. Start with light weights.

Do each 8 exercises below for 40 sec, after you have completed the 8, take 30 seconds rest, repeat this 2 more times. Do all the below with good posture

Week 3		Week 4	
Monday	10min Warm up as week one	Monday	10 min warm up as week one
	Plank get ups		RDL
	Alternating Superman		Bicep Curls
	Bird Dog		Bent over Row
	Squat		Tricep push backs
	Calf raises		Flutter kicks
	Upright row		Crunches with heel taps
	Pressups		Mountain Climbers
	Mountain Climbers		Fast feet
	Stretch		Stretch
Thursday	10min WU as week one	Thursday	10min WU as week one
	Plank, Leg raises.		Plank get ups
	Press ups		Side plank.
	Sit ups		Side plank with upper leg raises
	Alternating Superman		Glut bridge walk outs
	Flutter kick		Russian twists
	Jumping Jacks		Burpees
	Jumping side to side		Squat side steps 5 right, and left
	Lunges		fast feet
	Stretch		Stretch

Cycling

Our cycling coach, Mick Scully, has provided us with some pointers that he believes are important to a successful winter training preparation on the bike:

- 1** Make sure your bike is in good condition, perhaps bring it to wherever you normally have it serviced.
- 2** Proper lights fitted front and rear. Clothing is also very important, that it fits and that it is fit for purpose, given our Irish weather. Also a high visibility jacket is necessary if you are out after dark. Also it's a good idea to clean your bike at least once a week, yes, I said once a week, to make sure it's in good working order. A rear mudguard is preferable particularly when training in a group so as not to spray water on the rider on your wheel believe me they will thank you for it.
- 3** The pacing of the winter spins, as a rule of thumb, should allow riders to be able to have a conversation with each other at all times. If this can't be achieved then the group is going too fast for your fitness level at that point in time. In the winter it is always better to stay out longer than to speed up.
- 4** The winter training period is very important to build an endurance platform for the fast training sessions in the spring and summer months but the spins should be done with care that is being able to converse with one another.



WINTER TRAINING

Mick hopes these things will improve your winter training and stresses that if anyone has any questions about their bike training they should not hesitate to contact him directly. The cycling training continues throughout the winter, meeting at the Portlaoise Leisure centre at 6.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Sunday morning group cycles also continue throughout the winter.

Running

Our running coach, Denise Murphy, does coached sessions on the track in Portlaoise on Wednesday evenings. She provided us with the following:

Base Phase Running for Triathlon

The Triathlon Season is usually broken down into various phases where an athlete varies their training stresses throughout the year to improve their overall performance.

When we start back training in November we are entering the Preparation phase, starting with the base period. This is where we work on building a good aerobic base off of which all of our further training later in the year is built on. This preparation phase lasts about 16 weeks with the first 8 being the base preparation. So pretty much all your training this side of 2021. This goes for all 3 of our disciplines.

Running specific

The specific ingredients in the base phase are:

1. Increase endurance and the aerobic capacity of the athlete.
2. Begin training the central nervous system - the communication pathways between your brain and muscles.
3. Improve your muscular strength to prevent injuries and to allow for the body's ability to adapt to more challenging workouts later in the preparation phase.

How do you do this?

Increase endurance and build an aerobic base.

Slowly build up your runs and your running distance.

Run slow enough with a low heart rate to build up a strong aerobic base. This is where it's important to know your heart rate zones and to run within them. This time of the year around 80% of your running should be in Z1/Z2.

Run a lot (build up your mileage). Increase mileage every 2 weeks or so.

Run long - start re-introducing your weekly long run. Build up to 2-3 runs a weeks.

Run aerobic workouts - include some tempo work that keeps you in your aerobic zone.

Training the central nervous system

Run strides: at the start of a run once or twice a week. Drill focus.

Run hill sprints - once a week - start with a distance/time and slowly increase over the weeks. Drills or hill reps.

Run fartlek runs - every 2-3 weeks. Slowly increase your distance/time over a few weeks.

Muscular Strength

Begin with bodyweight strength exercises.

Add resistance after 1 or 2 months. Remember practice makes permanent not perfect. Make sure you know the required form before taking on some exercises and also make sure they are functional and suitable to running, cycling and swimming.



RACE REPORT

THE KERRY WAY ULTRA

BY RÓISÍN DUNNE

Last year tracking Paul Twomey around the 200km Kerry Way with the help of Aime Roche keeping us posted, I was inspired by this challenge. I wondered how could a gang of us head down to Kerry to take on the Ultra Lite (60km). I can tell you now there is nothing “Lite” about that 60km trail run.

Roll on nearly a year later to March and we’ve signed up and have our crew sorted.

Runners: Aoife McEvoy, Denise Murphy, Trish Flood, Róisín Dunne

Support Crew: Claire Cosgrove, Martina Gardener, Sinead Lynch, Trish Flood

The week leading into the race I was a bag of nerves and when I heard the news that Trish Flood couldn’t participate due to injury and would now be joining the support crew this made me realise how lucky we all were to be able to toe the line after months of training.

Saturday morning quickly approached with a 5.30am start we headed from Killarney to the start in Sneem. Watching the Sunrise across the mountains with a cloudless sky above the mountain peaks I knew we were in for a good day.

The Kerry Way is the most laid-back race I’ve ever participated in, definitely when compared to the triathlon world. Last year’s 200km winner, Aoife Mundow checked my bag for all its’ kit. Trying to not fan girl at the time. She was just back from Chamonix UTMB World Championships only taking up trail running two years ago there is time for us all to get involved in this mad sport.

I had three things in my head as we gathered together to start the race at 9am.

1. Smile
2. Dont fall
3. Make it to the end by the cut off

We set off into the hills of Kerry guided by the yellow man, he would lead us back to Killarney. On the recce when Aoife and I doubted his guidance I told her it’s never down always “UP” when following him meander through the boreens and grassy paths.

Aoife McEvoy “the chance to have an exhilarating run in the calmest most beautiful trails and mountains of the kingdom, where friendships are made, battles are fought, and the true meaning of support emerges”

The first section all the runners were bunched together along the narrow trails. All of us cautious on footing for the first few kms as we meandered up into the mountains. We crossed Sneem river and followed quiet backroads across bogland areas and up Knockanamande mountain to soak in the spectacular views of the Beara Peninsula.

There was a lovely wooded track that led to the abandoned 19th century village of Tahilla.

I was shocked to still be surrounded by lots of runners even though the pack had thinned out a bit along this mountain section. I had my head down concentrating on getting up this section closely followed by 3 others when I stopped and looked to my right to see a beautiful view of the mountains. I think at that moment about 10km in it sunk in how lucky we all were to be able to take on this adventure together on a picture-perfect day and I don’t have Michelle Grainger skills!

RACE REPORT

THE KERRY WAY ULTRA

BY RÓISÍN DUNNE

At this stage one of the marshals shouted that I was in the top 10 women. I was slightly buzzing off this news, however, as we descended down off the mountain the women following me quickly overtook me as I carefully descended this section terrified to fall. We all had to go to work Monday morning and I'd be no good to anyone in a sling! I have no competitive bone in my body. I'm all about the participation and being in the outdoors therefore I was happy out following the pack.

Claire Cosgrove "most dramatic run I've ever witnessed from the isolated and dramatic landscapes to brens and mountains"

Welcomed across the Black Valley Bridge to our cheering Support crew this was a great lift to get as we now ran into a stunning section wooded area looking across at Coongar Harbour and Drongawn Lough.

We headed for Templeoe our first crew stop a with a beaming smile I met the amazing crew with ice and cold drinks for the back pack. Walking up this section with Jaffa cakes and a cold drink I was delighted to get this far feeling so good heading into the mountains again with 40km to go!

From Templeoe the route ascended to the spur of Lacka hill crossing the Reen river and climbing to Gortamullin Hill again witnessing remarkable views of the Caha mountains and Beara Peninsula from a different angle.

Along this route I met many 200km runners, at this stage they were on the route for around 30 hours. Their sticks were their anchor as they focused on the road ahead.

I sent words of encouragement and they still managed a "thank you" I couldn't get over how kind everyone was along the route we all had words of encouragement for each other and had little conversations along the way to pass a few kms together.

Trish Flood "It was mentally the toughest sporting event I've ever done as a result of watching from the side-line but every single bit of pain watching three fantastic ladies completing their awesome challenge along with friendships that I built up with all the support crew"

The boggy terrain was dried up to make it a blissful path to run down into Kenmare. My biggest concern of the day was losing concentration as even though the path was dry you still had to dodge holes, rocks and marsh. Five-star treatment 6km to Kenmare on top of a mountain I rang the crew for flat coke to get a bit of a boost the final section. Delighted to reach Kenmare town an energetic little town with runners and support crews.

Blisters started to creep in at this section. Plasters applied, the flat coke was drank as if it was going out of fashion! Denise Murphy "an amazing event that provided challenging mountain trail and terrain where both mental and physical limits are tested. All with being helped along by a support crew that met your every need with a smile and a cheer right to the finish line. The team comradery was every bit inspiring as the views".

This climb out of Kenmare lasted about 4km and 4 times the size of the Cut in Laois. A fellow runner described



RACE REPORT

THE KERRY WAY ULTRA

BY RÓISÍN DUNNE

it as a “hill from hell”. I was also warned to walk this section. No problem, I ate my flapjack happily ascending the hill. I really think we are blessed in Laois to have the Sliabh blooms on our doorway, I pretty much spent every Saturday morning in the hills and didn't shy away from climbs just slow and steady and you'll get to the top. I won't lie though the back hill in Stradbally is still a monster of a hill I've named that “cardiac hill”

Up and up, we go into the mountains following the old Kenmare Road. We cut through Peakeen and Knockanaguish mountains into the Windy Gap with superb views of the MacGillicuddy Reeks mountains. From here we passed Mangerton Mountain. This section was the most difficult part for me. There were lovely benches hidden away in the rocks and all I wanted was a nap! We had to climb over boulders and I thought this section wasn't runnable at all. Until a few mountain goats of runners came flying past me! I had about 10km to go and there was no sign of Torc mountain. I was delighted that my nutrition plan went to plan I got great tips from Pam Grogan leading into the race and stuck to the plan meticulously. Earlier in the year I was told by one of the 200km race past runners that if you master the nutrition that will get you to the end not your head. I had believed for endurance events that you just hang in there at the end. However, he was dead right to get the nutrition in consistently.

Finally, I saw a man descending off the Torc mountain to my euphoria! I knew it was finally all down hill and flat to the Nissan garage to town. I hit the Torc Waterfall where I met my Mam and Martina I'd say they were delighted to finally see me emerge from that section. To my shock I met a girl that had passed me 10km earlier. We shuffled down by Torc waterfall together with tourists cheering us along this section. At this stage I got a new lease of life and didn't look at the watch. Running as best I could through the national park passed Lough Leanne and Muckross House. I couldn't believe I managed to catch up with all the mountain goats that passed me along the old Kenmare Road! I managed to catch them and got one of the girls to run along with me for a bit until her knees gave in and demanded her to walk.

Now the final section, still running, the clock distance ticking downwards to the last few kms. I was thrilled to be still running at this stage of the race and no pains or aches. Don't worry I made up for this the next day! Exactly how I dreamt the finish line would be, there was Aoife McEvoy with a cheerful smile all dressed and washed to meet me with Aime Roche, Paul Twomey, Mam and Martina. The finish line set up is exactly like running into Downey's garage and rush hour lunch time. So many people oblivious to the challenge that hundreds of runners took on that day.

Martina Gardinar “A great race to be able to crew for with inspirational ladies taking on a challenging course in the Kerry mountains”

The best race to date, with the most scenic views. Counting myself lucky with the weather and for the day to go absolutely perfectly for all three of us.

We had the best crew along the way, always one step ahead of us with anything we needed to get us through the day.



**At the finish line (L - R)
Aoife, Denise, Roisin & Paul**



Triathlon
World Championships

Long Distance
ALMERE - AMSTERDAM



RACE REPORT BY NIALL KAVANAGH

Congratulations/Gefeliciteerd

Niall Kavanagh

Aquabike

01:14:27

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12th September 2021

World Championship Aquabike Race in Almere, Holland - 3.8Km swim and 180km bike

Cruised through the 3.8Km swim and now I've just passed the 150km mark, with only 30km to go. This is where the real test begins! Cycled 8000 km in the last 8 months which has delivered me to this point in good shape and now it's time to find out how much hurt can I handle. Time now to let it rip, to bury myself on the bike! As Sean Kelly used say about bike racing, it's not the fastest man who wins but the one who can suffer the most!

Triathlons without the run are starting to suit me better as I age because running injuries are becoming too easy to come by. So when I heard of the inaugural Irish Championship "Aquabike" race in Lough Cutra, Galway in 2019, I signed up and then John Corcoran and myself won our age groups in the 1.9km swim and 90K bike race. We both qualified for the European and World Championships, but Covid came along and the races were delayed until 2021. The European race was in Austria in June but because of quarantine rules and travel restrictions it wasn't possible to go. But the World championship race in September in Holland was more accessible. The World Championship Aquabike was held in conjunction with the World Championship Long distance Triathlon race, ie 'Ironman distance' and it is run under the 'CHALLENGE' brand. Almere is just 25 minutes North on the train from Schipol airport in Holland. It is a new green city built on reclaimed land with a wonderful biking infrastructure. Almere was celebrating 40 years of this long distance triathlon, only 2nd in longevity to Kona in Hawaii. The set up and infrastructure behind this event is second to none and even though there was a lot more paperwork to enter and register due to Covid, their people were friendly and helpful. The swim is in a freshwater lake, lovely at 20 degrees and the bike was 2 laps of a flat 90KM in the countryside with the only difficulty being the headwinds in this flat open countryside.

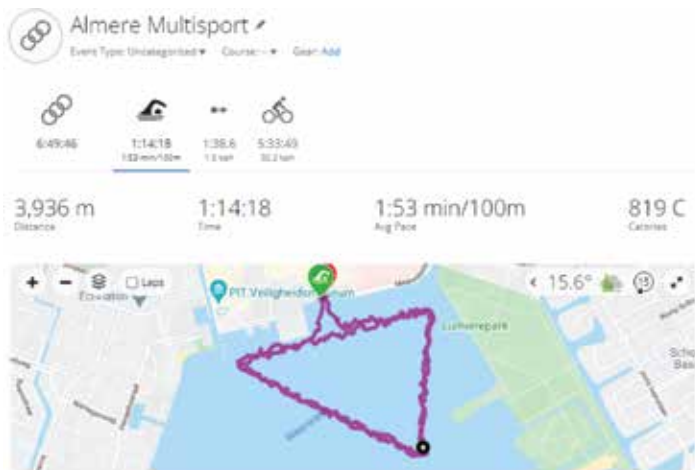
So the first off were the Triathlon pros, followed by age groupers, then the Aquabike age groupers. Water was gorgeous and the rolling starts that are now popular eliminate the usual madness of the mass start. I was very happy with my swim and clocked 1hr 14 mins. The sessions with Eimear in Derryounce and Maganey had paid off and I felt strong getting out of the water. Now for the 180k spin. With the help of our Coach Mick Scully, I had trained differently for this race. Over the winter on Zwift, I got to understand Power and WATTS and how to cycle monitoring watts rather than speed or heart rate.



For anyone interested in Power, Jonathan Forest has great knowledge of it and we had a very fruitful discussion while he was running his 128Km in July. My Functional Threshold Power, FTP, in August was at 220 watts and for an endurance event like this, the plan was to cycle at 70 to 75% of FTP, i.e. between 155 to 165 watts. I had bought special pedals "Assioma" which measures your power output in watts and displays it on the Garmin. The plan was to average 160 watts for the whole race and keep a heart rate at little less than 150bpm. My main Garmin page was set to show only power, heartrate and distance. Those were the numbers that mattered to me. If I could control the power output and not "burn my matches" early on in the race, I could ride a controlled race whatever the conditions were. So when the wind was behind me, keeping the power at 160 watts, it got me to speeds of 40km/hr while against the wind with the same power the speed dropped to 26km/hr. But keeping a steady output was the plan that I had agreed with Mick. But when I got to the last hour, the last 30Km, then I could let rip and if I did blow up' I would be close enough to the finish so I wouldn't lose too much time anyway. But I wanted to finish it leaving nothing in the tank and so glad that I had not run ahead of me.

The course was flat as flat could be with 99% of the time down in the aero position. There was a long straight section for 40 Km on a polder with the sea on one side and wide open farm land on the other. Nothing but straight flat road ahead, hardly any spectators and just watching my Garmin and turning the pedals.

On the first lap, the wind was behind us on the polder and I was averaging 40Km/hr though on the 2nd lap the wind had shifted to a cross wind and this section was slower. I have never seen as many motorbike marshals, so there was no chance of a helpful draft, and anyone that chanced it were caught and spent 5 mins in the sinbins along the way!



So I raced clean, no messing, felt strong and watched the kilometres falling away. Once the first 90km lap was done the 2nd seemed shorter because I knew the course now. Mid-way through the 2nd lap I was averaging 158 watts. So with about 30km to go I spotted this American guy, who I figured was in my age group. He looked good, fabulous bike, star spangled socks and I thought to myself as I passed him, “there is no way I am letting you come by me! I am ready for the hurt locker now and you are going to have to suffer so bad, because I am going to bury myself on the bike for this last 30km.” When racing, my mind comes up with some crazy some ideas, but whatever it takes to motivate myself, I’ll take! And so for the last 30k, into a headwind, I kept low and drove it on as hard as I could, passed many cyclists and was passed by no one! My average watts finished at 160, right on target and the legs were burning and well and truly shot. My plan was for 6 hours in the bike but came in at 5hrs 33min. Delighted with myself and thrilled to have had the chance to challenge myself and really push it out and not just wobble home but finish like a train on fire!

A lot of time, energy and preparation had gone into this race and it truly is a fantastic feeling when you deliver the performance you hoped possible. So many things can go wrong, I am very grateful for everything going right on the day. My overall time of 6 hours 54 mins put me in 14th position in my age group for a World Championship. The calibre of competition was awesome, the 2nd place guy in my group was an USA Olympic cyclist who clocked 40Km/hr for the 180K! The bikes on display there were something else too, I realised my own bike is a little dated like myself, so I’m writing a long letter to Santa Claus this Christmas!



Huge thanks to my No 1 supporter, Madeleine whose smiling face at the finish line is always a delight to see. To Murt Kean of Race Right Bicycles who sorted me out with wheels and a Bike Box and showed me the tricky mechanical art of packing a bike for air travel. To Mick Scully, our cycling coach, whose advice and training got me as fit on the bike as I have been in a long time and has raised the bar in our club. Thanks to Kieran Hoey of Right Bike Cycles who sourced me a lovely Aero helmet, it worked a treat.

To Eimear Matthews who has got us all swimming further and further and provides a safe environment for us all to swim. Finally to all the lads and girls I cycle with regularly, you are great company and thanks for waiting for me at the top of the hills!

Niall on his way to securing 14th place in his age category at the World Aquabike Championships, Almere, 2021.



RACE REPORT

IRONMAN PORTUGAL CASCAIS

BY STEVEN BREW

Thursday 21st of October

Flight out of Dublin airport nice and early for the flight a full plane full of wanna be Ironmen athletes who were hoping to hear those magic words “You are an Ironman”. The plane was full of smiles and excitement of getting to Cascais. Landed in Lisbon airport at around 9:15, the flight was about 2 and a half hours, taxi to Cascais is another 30 min or thereabouts. Getting to my hotel and seeing a Bentley outside thinking to myself “Jess what did you book?” There’s a very high standard of hotel here anyways.

As I arrived early I wasn’t let check in so I had time to make up my bike after the trip from Ireland. I had been carrying a bit of a knock going into this weekend so I wanted to try out the bike to make sure it was running perfect and also to get a bit of a run in. Everything went OK on the little test so quick shower and down to register for the race. The party atmosphere was starting to build up, it’s what you come to expect from these races.

Friday 22nd October Up nice and early and started to really think about Saturday, putting race numbers on my gear and bike bib number 999. Bike racking wasn’t open until 3pm so I basically ate and sat around all day. Racked the bike around 3 and once that’s done it’s show time. Going into a race like this, once the bikes in transition there’s no turning back, the training is done now go enjoy yourself. As you walk out of transition you get your timing chip, that goes straight on to your left ankle and as Trish Nicholls says: that’s stays on your ankle once you get it.

Saturday 23rd October RACE DAY

Up around 5am, straight down to the bike load up the water bottles and put shoes on the bike, the normal stuff you do in a sprint. Head back to the hotel for breakfast, the hotel had a lot of athletes staying in it, the nerves and excitement in the room at breakfast is something hard to explain but in a good way, everyone wishing everyone good luck for the day ahead.

Swim: Down to the pier for 7:50 swim start. Grand you might say and I would agree. I put myself into the 1hr - 1hr 10 swim time, figured I would get a good draft on the swim. The swimmers were let off in 4s every 4 seconds. Straight into the water and it was lovely and warm, I couldn’t believe it for a sea swim. It went very well, I sighted better than I’ve ever done, I think I was only 100m out.

Out of the swim you get a nice shower to wash off the salt water, then a 500m run to the bike. Taking it all in was my focus and listening to the crowd and family was something else unbelievable



Wife Jess & Steven - Team Brew



RACE REPORT

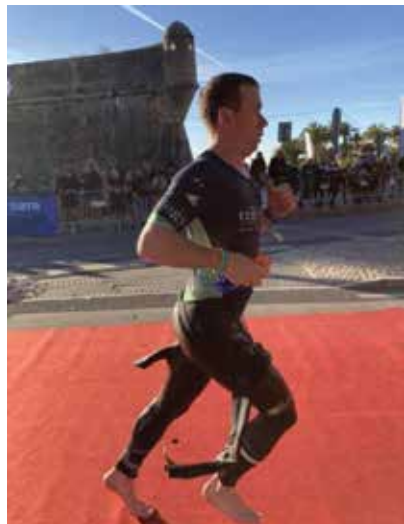
IRONMAN PORTUGAL CASCAIS

BY STEVEN BREW

The Bike: Nice flat cycle for the first 20k, averaging 35-36k an hour. I knew there was a hill coming and did it come! 8k of 3% grade of climbing, then once that was done you climbed like a cork screw up the mountains. The climbing was very similar to Glendine from the Kinnity side but not as cold. But what goes up must come down, coming back down off the mountain entering a small town and villages the locals cheering you on gives you a real buzz. My favourite part then, the F1 track, (I love F1 racing!) you do a lap of that then back into Cascais.

You enter the town to hundreds of people still cheering, you cycle up the coast for 20k then turn around and head back onto the 2nd lap, where you don't do as much climbing there, about 1000m climbing on the first lap, 500m on the 2nd lap.

The Run: The run was a simple out and back course, wind in your face on the way out and rolling hills. You get a good push on the way back in, plenty of aid stations on route every 2k or that. You go to the start finish line and turn around to start another lap, you'd be in a bit of discomfort here but the buzz of the crowd makes it all go away.



'It's possibly one of my greatest sporting achievements'

The Finish

Getting to the finish line of an Ironman is something that anyone can get to, a little work and when you hear those words "You are an Ironman" it's possibly one of my greatest sporting achievements, to share it with Jess my wife, my cousins and parents-in-law is something very special.

'I just wanna say thanks to everyone for the messages over the last few days, time for R&R now and beer.'

Steven Brew - October 2021





RACE REPORT

IRONMAN ALCUDIA MALLORCA

BY DARRAGH RIGNEY

Background

On Saturday 16th of October at 7:45AM in Port d' Alcudia, both Ironman Full and 70.3 Mallorca kicked off with the pro men's field entering the water first, followed by the female pros and age groupers. There were approximately 4000 entrants across both events which made for a great atmosphere on the day.

Alcudia is approximately 40mins drive from Palma airport. It's a beautiful town with plenty of reasonably priced hotels and restaurants. A white sandy beach lines the town with crystal clear water. The island of Mallorca is a cyclist's paradise, with more bikes on the roads than cars, smooth roads and ideal weather.

We arrived in Mallorca on the Tuesday before the race. We got a taxi from Palma airport straight to our hotel (Hotel Ivory Playa) which was just under 3km from the transition area and the centre of Alcudia town. I used a company called TRI Bike Transport to bring my bike over to the race. I dropped the bike to them in Lucan the previous week and was able to collect it at the race venue on the Thursday before the race.

I unfortunately developed a mild head cold on the Wednesday so training and prep for the race was kept to a minimum.

I collected my race pack and completed registration on the Thursday before the race. Because of Covid, every athlete had to select an individual time to complete this which meant there was no queuing on the day, and I was in and out within 5 minutes. On Friday, I had selected an afternoon slot to check in my bike and transition bags which allowed me time that morning to cycle the first 20km of the bike course and ensure there were no last-minute issues with the bike. It also gave me a feel for the start of the bike course and what was to come the next day.

The Course

The swim was an out and back loop in Alcudia bay. The water was clear, calm and 21°C. It was a rolling start with the athletes doing the full Ironman going first. There were 11 start boxes which each athlete had to place themselves in to prior to the race start based on estimated time to complete the swim.

The bike course was 90km. The first 20km leaving Alcudia was flat however from 20km to 35km it was a constant climb with an average gradient of 4%. From the top of the climb, there was a 7km downhill section with hairpin bends. We were warned several times to be extra careful here. The remaining bike course was mostly flat with one or two short sharp climbs. The course was closed to traffic, very well marked and marshalled. There were three aid stations throughout the bike course at 15km, 50km and 71km.

The Run Course was 2 loops of 10.5km which took us out along the bay and through the town itself. There were aid stations at approximately every 3kms.

RACE REPORT

IRONMAN ALCUDIA MALLORCA

BY DARRAGH RIGNEY

The Race

I woke early on race day at 5:00AM, had my breakfast, checked my gear one last time and then got a taxi to the transition area where I did final checks on my bike and gear set up. I then headed to the beach about 45mins before my start time. It was a sunrise start and the water was very calm. AC/DC blaring over the speakers. Everybody seemed to be buzzing, except myself, who admittedly didn't know what to expect as it was my first ever middle-distance race and training for this had been very limited.

I anticipated a 45mins swim, so I positioned myself in the 45min swim box. The swim wasn't too bad in the end and I couldn't have asked for better swim conditions. After the first couple hundred meters, I began to tire a little too quick and the turnaround point seemed miles away. I kept plugging away and eventually made it to the turnaround which took me just over 25mins. From there, the way back seemed much easier with the tide being in my favour. I was out of the swim in exactly 45mins. I walked the transition and took my time here. Overall, I hadn't set any time goals, I just wanted to complete the race and enjoy the day.



Out on to the bike course and I decided to stay within a group for the first 20km. The pace was very comfortable, no stress and just tipping along. That changed once we got to the start of the climb. 15km's of non-stop climbing gaining approx. 700m of elevation. I found this quiet challenging. Heart rate was through the roof and I must have been overtaken by what felt like the whole field! The climb took just under one hour and from there I enjoyed the descent through the hair pin turns. I didn't go too hard here as I wanted to take in as much of the course as possible, which was stunning. Once I got off the mountain part and back onto the flats, I decided to throw caution to the wind and started pushing harder on the bike, which in hindsight wasn't very sensible, as with about 5kms left on the bike course, my legs started cramping.

I struggled back to transition and again took my time getting the running gear on before heading out onto the running course. I knew I was going to have no choice but to walk part of this as I simply wasn't fit enough. The first 3km's to the first aid station felt like a half marathon in itself! The weather was now in the mid-20s, and I was struggling big time. I started to jog/walk every couple of km's for lap 1 and then for lap 2, I walked more than I jogged as my legs and arms at this point were cramping big time.

Coming to the end of the run with about a km to go, I wanted to run but I got to within 100 meters of the finishing shoot and just like that, my legs completely cramped up. I stopped around the corner from the finishing shoot for a quick stretch before jogging (limping!) over the finish line.

Results:

Altogether it took me 7hrs and 1 min. Swim 45mins, Bike 3hrs 30mins and Run 2hrs 30mins

Apart from the struggles, I really enjoyed this race. The area, and in particular the bike course, is stunning. I'd highly recommend this race to anyone considering it.



RECOVERY

ATHLETIC THERAPIST

ROISIN DUNNE - SAOL ACLAI

Recovery strategies and current research insight into these methods.

Active recovery

Massage: Massage increases blood flow to remove metabolites and mobilize inflammatory markers. Blood lactate removal. Positive effects for muscle performance and soreness DOMS (delayed onset of muscle soreness). Massage effectively modifies perception of recovery and soreness. The effect of massage on correlates of performance is less clear and may be strongly influenced by the inclusion of other recovery strategies.

Neuromuscular electrical stimulation Increase blood flow and metabolic removal through muscle pump action. Reduction in pain through stimulation of sensory nerve endings.

Stretching Studies demonstrate that there does not seem to be any detrimental effects on performance for post exercise stretching.

Sleep The best recovery method available to athletes. Given the effects of sleep deprivation on performance. Athletes should be educated on appropriate strategies to enhance sleep.

Water immersion Minimise the inflammatory response, decrease oedema and pain, limit swelling and increase central blood volume facilitation. Cold water immersion and contrast water immersion. Research is still ongoing to fully elucidate the long-term effects of water immersion on training adaptation

Compression Compression clothing to aid with lymphatic drainage and circulatory conditions. The compression garment may reduce swelling, inflammation, muscle soreness and therefore enhance recovery. Recommended to wear at least 60 minutes post exercise to maximise the recovery process.

Nutrition Essential for complete recovery.

The following are primary concerns when aiming to recover effectively post training and racing.

1.fluid replacement The best way to measure fluid lost during exercises is to weigh yourself pre and then post workout. Every 1kg lost equates to 1 litre of fluid loss. Water and sodium at a modest rate to replace loss during exercise.

2.restoring fuels (carbs) Glycogen replacement is one of the goals post exercise. Aim for recovery drinks, snacks and meals providing carbohydrates equal to 1 g/kg/hour body mass for the 1st 4 hours post exercise.

3.Repair (protein) Prolonged high intensity exercise causes substantial breakdown of muscle protein. Early intake post exercise of essential amino acids helps to promote the increase in protein rebuilding.

RACE REPORT

METALMAN - MIDDLE DISTANCE

BY DAVE MURPHY



After 2 very confusing and unstructured seasons it was great to be back racing. Newtown Cove, Waterford just 3k west of Tramore was the scene of the crime. I brought the family down for this one and we left Portarlinton on the Friday evening. We booked into the campsite that was 100m from transition. It doesn't get any easier than that and this was the last thing that came easy to me that weekend.

Registration, Transition and the loot

With registration opening so early we were advised to bring a torch as it would be dark. Face coverings were mandatory in registration and transition. It was only at the swim start that we could remove our face coverings. Transition was on a closed road and one long line of racking that spanned around 400m.

Registration and transition was seamless, and we were soon directed to an area called Guillamene Cove for the start. Although we received our goodie bags at registration, it wasn't until later that afternoon that I investigated the content. The backpack is good quality and will be useful. Two drink bottles a travel mug, a finishers medal/bell, 2 cans of strange flavored beers and a few other bits and pieces.



The Swim

Knowing it was a rolling start I made my way to the front of the crowd but not so close that I would be first in the water. I think I was one half of the 5th pair into the water. It was a one lap 1900m clockwise swim course. I must say the water was not as cold as I thought it would be and more important there wasn't a jellyfish to be seen. The sea was calm with minimal swell but that could be different next year so don't blame me if you end up in a washing machine. The swim exit was at Newtown Cove, approximately 100m west of the swim start. As I stood up and checked the Garmin for an update, I was pleasantly surprised to see I was over 3 minutes ahead of plan.



T1

The run from the swim exit to transition was nasty. My trusty Garmin recorded 120m of elevation in transition alone. The road surface was also terrible with a coarse stone surface. As the transition from swim exit to bike start was 600m there was lots of oohs and aahs because of the underfoot conditions. By the time I got to my bike I considered taking my shoes off the pedals to save my feet from what felt like running on nails. This being the inaugural year we will learn from our mistakes and leave a spare pair of runners that can be picked up along the way. Some were wise enough to have done that this year. Thankfully I soon found myself sitting on my bike.



RACE REPORT

METALMAN - MIDDLE DISTANCE

BY DAVE MURPHY

The Cycle

Nothing much to report on for the 90k bike course except the last 20k was torture. I'm not saying the first 70k was easy, rather the last 20k was ridiculously tough. Hills so steep that you couldn't but give your max to get to the top. 920m of elevation over the 90k is fairly tough. The course in general had a good surface and was reasonably well marshalled. On some roundabouts there were no marshalls but the road was marked with directional arrows so there was no switching off allowed or you could easily find yourself in Skibbereen or Drogheda.

T2

I remembered the feet and the oohs and aahs so I dismounted with my shoes still on. Nothing to report here either except you had to run all the way down through transition to ensure a neutral transition. This made T2 800m.

The worst experience of my life The Run

I knew I hadn't over cooked the cycle because the legs felt good at the start of the run. I knew there was 268m of elevation ahead of me. The run course for some reason was only 18.5k and not the traditional 21.1k. I can honestly say this was the hardest 18.5k I have ever ran. The hills were relentless. You were either going up a hill or down a hill, no flat sections worth mentioning. Going down was almost harder than going up because the fast downhill turnover of the legs really impacted on the quads. The last kilometer was on a manageable downhill that incorporated running through transition and at this stage transition was busy with people finishing their cycle and starting the run.

The recovery area was unmanned (damn covid) there was water, Yoghurt, Creamed Rice, Choco & Strawberry milk, so not too shabby. I also met Conor Heffernan and Aisling Bohan who were there supporting a friend. The organisers, Waterford Triathlon Club put on a great race which I'm sure will be a regular on the TI Calendar. I'm not sure when but I feel I have a score to settle with a run course that kicked my ass. I'll be back!



UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH MARK SYTHES



Name: Mark Sythes

Age Category: 40 -45 years

Sporting Background:

I've never really had a sporting background, except from that of cycling a bike. In my teenage years, a friend introduced me to cycling and I eventually got a taste for cycling longer distances. Cycling wasn't that popular in the mid '90's compared to today's interest, so getting set up for it wasn't as straight forward. You couldn't buy a pre-built racing bike in those days.

It became more of a sport for me around 1993 when I got to know a local bike shop owner in Portlaoise, John Boylan. He had a lot of cycle racing experience and put me on the road to competitive cycling. When I began college at Waterford I.T. in 1997, I met some familiar faces from my Sunday racing and eventually ended up joining two cycling clubs! My affiliated club was Newbridge C.C. and we also set up a Waterford I.T. college cycling club.

By 2001 I had quit cycling and it would be a further 12 years before I took it up again on a more leisurely basis doing cycling sportives and club races with Unlaoised C.C.

When did you take up triathlons?

I joined Trilogy Triathlon club in January 2020 and signed up for the PinS group.

At that point I had almost no swimming experience, limited running experience but had a cycling background.

Why did you choose to take up the sport?

I had watched the Tri Laois and Tri Athy triathlons for a few of years but not being able to swim or run competitively distanced me from considering taking part in one. It always sat in the back of my mind that I might eventually do one.



A couple of years ago I started a new job and became friends with a colleague who was an experienced runner. He talked about running so much that he eventually got me started doing a bit in the evenings after work until I could manage to do 5k and eventually 10k. By coincidence while on the phone one day he dropped the line "Sure you could nearly do a triathlon now!" and I decided that the time had arrived.

I spotted the Trilogy PinS programme and that offered me the best starting point for training for my first triathlon. So I ventured up to the open evening at Des Mallon Motors and signed on the dotted line.....

What strengths did you bring to the sport?

Having a cycling background definitely helped me level the playing field a bit. While being last out of every swim would lose me time, I could claw back a bit on the bike and then just manage what I could on the run.

What did/do you find challenging?

Open water swimming was definitely a bigger shock to the system than I thought. My first evening in The Barrow in Athy was a horror. Thankfully Sharon Roche and Catherine Phelan guided me through my maiden voyage and thanks to their support I didn't walk away from it that night.

What do you like most about the sport?

What I like about this sport is, it's mostly up to yourself to define it. You can take it as seriously as you want or you can enjoy it at a level that best suits you. There is a great social atmosphere and a variety of sporting events. You get to meet people from many sporting backgrounds with varying degrees of experience and ability.

Can you spot which one is Mark? Waterford IT Intervarsities

What has been your biggest learning experience so far within the sport?

My biggest learning experience was navigating the sport at a pace I could manage. With 3 disciplines, time and effort management also became a factor. Being a weak swimmer meant I was going to have to put time into improving. I found the coached training sessions in Portarlington pool and Derryounce lake very beneficial and got a lot of guidance from Eimear Matthews.



Anything to say about Trilogy club?

Trilogy offers club members a great place to progress. From beginner to advanced, everyone can find their place in the club. With numerous training sessions, a selection of club series races and club outings there is no shortage of activity to get involved in each week. The coached training sessions offer members a great opportunity to develop weaker disciplines and advance stronger ones. There is a brilliant committee of people in the club who invest their time selflessly to the development of the club, its activities and its members. There is a great social atmosphere and enthusiasm in the club and I have made many new friends since joining last year.

What is your favourite training session and why?

It would be easy to say the cycling training sessions, but I'd have to say I thoroughly enjoyed the Derryounce Monday evening sessions throughout the summer. They brought my swimming along immensely and it also felt like going to the beach after work on a nice summer's evening!!

What is your most memorable sporting moment?

In 1998, I was a member of the Waterford I.T. cycling team that hosted the Cycling Intervarsity's road race and time trial. We were fortunate enough to have a national level cyclist on the team who won both races and we won the overall team prize. One of our members also knew Sean Kelly, so we were lucky to have one of the most successful competitive cyclists of all time to present the prizes.

Anything to say about the Club race series?

I think everyone will agree that we are very lucky to have such a successful club race series. Even if you decided never to compete in an open race, you could get as much satisfaction and experience within the club race series as you might ever need. There is plenty of competition between members and you can have as much or as little hardship as you want.

Do you have a particular philosophy or motto or motivational mantra?

"If it's worthwhile it takes time"

For me it's about continual improvement and being better than I was, even if it's only gradual changes. It's good to have a goal to strive for as it will make the journey more satisfying. What you learn along the way makes you the person you are.

What are your top tips to others for training or racing?

Train at a pace that best works for you. There are some elements you will be good at and some areas that will need development. A manageable level of consistency is important, but equally important is adequate recovery.



Mark at Lough Cutra Triathlon 2021
L-R Damien, Mark Synthes, Mark P & Derek

Any nutritional tips? E.g. pre- race food

Unfortunately, this is an area that I fall down in and couldn't offer any decent advice. I guess a sensible diet can help in many aspects. To answer the question, if I was heading on a Sunday morning 100km plus spin, I would have porridge with tea and toast for breakfast. I would bring some energy gels or bars, and an electrolyte drink for hydration and/ or an energy drink (e.g. High 5 or similar). One thing to avoid on a longer ride is a hunger knock. But often better to stop and have a decent sandwich somewhere as opposed to feasting on energy products. At the end of a long session a protein recovery drink is also helpful.

What are your plans for winter training?

The aspect I like about winter training is it gives me a chance to do more endurance based training. I enjoy longer weekend endurance cycles and runs on country roads. I'm aiming to get two swim sessions per week over the winter, as Covid 19 restrictions on pools last winter limited making any progress. Also a short midweek cycle and run.

What are your goals for the next racing season?

I hope to do a few sprint triathlon races next year. I have signed up for the Lough Cutra middle distance triathlon as well, I did the Sprint Plus there this year which was my first open race. I haven't done a sea swim yet so hope to put that on the cards.

I also hope to do some club cycle races and a few long distance Audax Ireland cycle events.

What are your long term goals?

My long term goals are to try and keep a decent level of fitness and improve my overall triathlon ability. I'd like to improve my swim time especially, as that would give my overall time a great boost.

**Congratulations to Mark
who won:**

**'Most Improved Male' 2021
Trilogy Triathlon Club**



**Mark after Trilogy's Training Ironman
Derryounce, 2021**



RACE REPORT

TRIED AND TESTED TRIATHLON - DUNGARVAN

BY JOHN CORCORAN

DUNGARVAN TRIED AND TESTED TRIATHLON

Saturday, September 11th – 10am

Trilogy Competitors: John and Monica Corcoran

Getting there: Clonea Beach, Dungarvan is around a 2 hour drive from Portarlinton. Roads are good for the most part with little or no delays along the way.

REGISTRATION

We left Port shortly after 6am. With the car packed the night before we eliminated the 'what did we forget' worry. Registration for the event that morning was opened to satisfy the wave allocations. We were lucky to be in Wave 3 which had a later opening of 8am-8:30am. Registration was located just beside the main parking area and transition.

TRANSITION

Back to the car to pick up the bike, bike gear and runners after registration. With all the stickers placed on helmets, bikes and race belts, we were in and out of transition in 20 mins. No fuss, everyone was in good spirits as the sun was starting to poke its head out through the clouds over the bay. While in transition we got talking to the eventual winner before the race as we were looking for anyone with a spare belt. He had one of the elastic laces as a belt! Great idea, sorted. Hiccup No.1 averted.

RACE BRIEF

Race brief was held in the transition area. The swim was broken into three waves: Wave 1 dedicated to juniors while Waves 2 and 3 were dedicated to the not so juniors!

THE RACE

SWIM 750M

The swim of 750m kicked off with Wave 1 competitors entering in pairs at 5 second intervals. As soon as they were off, Wave 2 were summoned to the start line and dispatched. Within the space of a few minutes it was the start of Wave 3 and we were up the front for that. You could see that the waves were not allocated by swim time splits as the entire field of wave 1 and wave 2 were well spread out to sea.

With no acclimatisation it was nice to jump into the sea water after the short run from the start line. Staying out of the wash of other swimmers, the water was so clear you could see the sea bed for the entire swim.

Transition from swim to bike is no more than 100m of a run up a slight incline from the beach and it's a short run to the bike start after disposing of the wetsuit.

The BIKE ROUTE. 23KM

The route could be described as an out and back undulating, technical course (few hills with a nice few twisty bends in layman's talk). Luckily the first few kilometres are flat enough to allow the heart and lungs recover from the swim and get the body set for the challenge. The half-way turning is a sharp turnaround in the centre of the road. From there you know what is ahead of you so it is head down and work harder for home. You are also able to keep an eye on who is coming behind you as you return back to transition.

THE RUN 5.5K

The run is a loop of 5.5km along a combination of quiet roads and walking paths and is relatively flat. Half way along the route you get a very scenic view of Dungarvan town over the bay. Crossing the finish line with the satisfaction of a good race was met with plenty of refreshments. Great Race, Great Day!

HOW WE DID:

This was Monica's 5th sprint distance triathlon and second time to take on Dungarvan. With a brilliant bike and run split Monica came in 2nd female overall. I came home 16th overall, third in my age group after the fourth fastest swim and 10th fastest bike split. Loosing free time with a poor T2 and my running needs a lot more work to get me back up the board. Whatever the result it is always humbling to look up the leader board to see age groupers in their 60's ahead of you!

Dungarvan is a great town with plenty of places to go for good food. After a celebratory pint and a nice meal it was back in the car for the drive home, dissecting the race performances.... could have... should have... next time.....

RACE REPORT

MOBY DICK TRIATHLON - YOUGHAL

BY TRISH NICHOLLS

Trilogy Competitors: Trish Nicholls, Gary Condell, Amy Edghill

I had this one on my 'To Do List' for a few years now and it didn't disappoint – weather conditions were perfect which helps. I will be back.

This Race was a 2pm start – Transition on the outskirts of the town with plenty of parking. I did travel down the day before (any excuse for a weekend away) but Amy & Gary travelled down & back on the day. Trilogy represented by three.

With all the new ways of doing things this year you Registered Online and arrived at Bike Check-In just having to show your ID. At your bike number was your Goodie Bag with Timing Chip, Race Cap & numbers and a very nice backpack. Bikes were well spaced apart and your kit bag also stayed in transition.



Amy in T1

After race briefing we walked 300mts down to Swim Start (sneaked in for a very quick dip) before lining up 2 x 2 seeding ourselves for the Rolling Start (cuts out the usual madness with less chance of loosing goggles due to arms & legs flying). It was a 250mts swim out, 300mts across and 200mts back to the beach. I was not too impressed with Navy Buoys as they were difficult to see. I was passed on the beach by Gary sprinting past me and Amy just behind who sprinted past me in T1.

The Bike Route was a 19kms out & back on a fairly flat but busy road which was well marshalled and any road issues circled in red paint. Back into T2 and off out on a two lap, 6 kms run with the first lap on the boardwalk and a few inclines along the route to test the legs – nice downhill into the FINISH.



Plenty of refreshments on offer at the Finish. I missed the No Announcing/Presentation of Race & Age Group Winners but hopefully that will be back next year.

Trish on her way to victory



Race result:
Trish Nicholls – 1st in age group
Amy Edghill – 1st in age group – 3rd lady overall
Gary Condell – 1st in age group – 8th man overall

RACE REPORT

HOOK OR BY CROOK TRIATHLON - WATERFORD

BY INGRID CONDELL

Hook or by Crook, Sprint Distance Triathlon by Ingrid Condell

Venue: Dunmore East, hosted by Waterford Triathlon Club

Saturday 18th September 2021

The Race

A sprint distance National Series Triathlon and the National Sprint Championships.

The Competitors

With 750 competitors this race is clearly a firm favourite with Triathletes from all over the country.

Trilogy competitors included Alan Hewison, Dave Murphy, Conor Heffernan, Mary Fingleton, Niall and

Madeleine Kavanagh, Ingrid Condell, Jane and Dee Dee Whelan and visiting boyfriend Tim, and Susan Wall.

The Swim It was a beach to beach swim from Councillor's Strand, in the lovely sheltered village of Dunmore East, out and turning left to come in at Lawlor's Strand. The conditions were perfect! The sun shone, the sky was blue, the sea was calm and the rolling start reduced the mayhem that is often at the start of a big race. For the less experienced or slightly nervous swimmers, the rolling starts that have been brought about to facilitate some degree of social distancing this season have been great for building confidence.

Out of the sea and up the ramp to Transition! This is the Triathlon of hilly transitions – steep ones!

The Bike: Onto the bike and a steep downhill to the first junction where you take a sharp left and then a right, that takes you out the Waterford road for an out and back cycle route.

The cycle ends back at that junction, this time the sharp turns are immediately before the steep incline back to transition. For those of us that find the technical parts of cycling a struggle this was challenging. I was relieved to pedal back into transition still safely in the saddle, having managed my gear changes well.

The Run: Runners on and ready for another steep hill. One of the biggest challenges of this race is the first part of the run, which is a really steep climb up through the car park, past the golf club where the rest of the run consisted of two laps on the grass of the golf course. The laps were undulating in parts with some fabulous views across the sea on a beautifully clear and sunny day.

Trilogy competitors were well supported by other members that came to watch and enjoy the day.



The Results

Alan Hewison came first in his age group, which makes him a National Champion!

Mary Fingleton came second in her age group and her sister, *Jane Whelan* came third.

A great day for that family (*Alan* is their brother-in-law) *Niall Kavanagh* came 4th in his age group.

Dunmore East never disappoints! The atmosphere is always great.



RACE REPORT

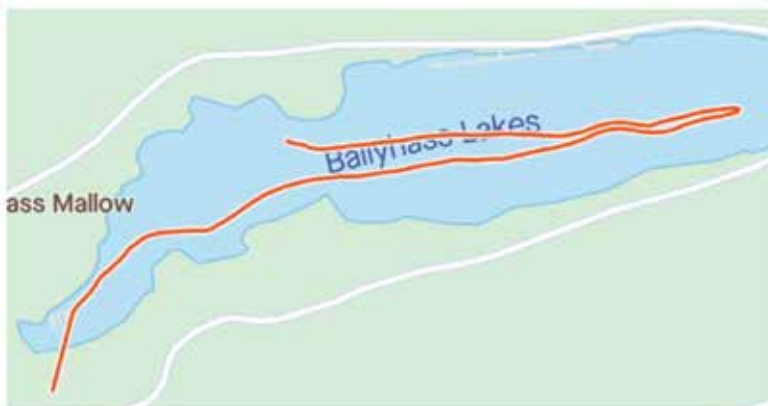
BALLYHASS SPRINT TRIATHLON

BY GARY CONDELL

Ballyhass Sprint Triathlon was organised by Mallow Triathlon Club. It took place on Sunday 26th September. This year it formed part of Triathlon Irelands National Series, it was the last race of the 2021 race series so there were scores to be settled ahead of a long winter and a last chance for points to be obtained.

The race briefing was completed virtually via zoom on the Thursday evening before the race. On Friday evening each participant was sent their race number via text message and this number determined what starting group you were in.

On the morning of the race transition opened at 8am and closed at 9:45am. On arrival to transition your licence and entry number were checked along with a non-contact bike check, which basically involved you illustrating that both your brakes were working and your helmet fastened. Transition was set up in a field just beside the quarry lake, so transitions weren't too long. Each competitor had their own numbered spot in transition, here you found your race bag with your timing chip, race stickers, t-shirt and goodie bag.



Ballyhass Swim Route

Group 1 had a start time of 10:30 am, as with most races this year there was a rolling start format following numerical order, with competitors being allowed into the water every 6 seconds. The swim took place in an old, flooded quarry. The swim start was off a pontoon with some competitors taking the opportunity to display their diving skills. The water in the quarry was crystal clear and somewhere in the region of 18 degrees we were told during the race brief. The quarry walls sheltered the lake resulting in calm waters and ease of sighting.

The cycle was a single loop, 22km long and consisted of some nice undulating drags, followed by fast down hill sections, about 2km from the end there was a steep hill just for good measure to make sure the legs were well warmed up before the run.

RACE REPORT

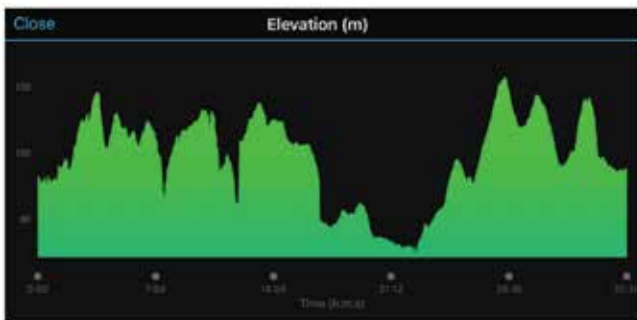
BALLYHASS SPRINT TRIATHLON

BY GARY CONDELL

The cycle route was very well marshalled along with all junctions having directions clearly spray painted onto the road.

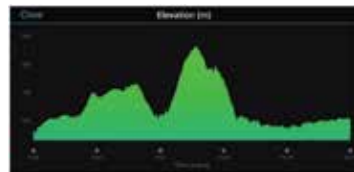


Ballyhass Cycle Route and Elevation



A 5km single lap run on the road including one very testing hill and a 500m grass finish brought the competitors through the finishing arch.

Overall, it was a nice run route, once you had got to the top of the steep ascent there was a very gradual downhill back towards transition which really helped to get the cadence back into the legs.



Ballyhass Run Route and Elevation



L-R: Gary, Madeleine, Amy & Niall

This race was extremely well organised, loads of marshals out on the course, always encouraging participants. The venue itself could not be faulted and it's a race I will certainly be back to compete in again.

The four Trilogy competitors were all placed in their age groups. Madeleine was first in hers, Amy was third, and Niall and I both came second in ours. A great day's racing was certainly had, one to mark into the calendar for next year.

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH MONICA CORCORAN



Monica Corcoran

Age Category : 45-50yrs

At the age of 40 I took up running after the birth of my third child. I decided I wanted to run a marathon for my 40th birthday. I entered the Dublin City Marathon in October 2013. I had never ran any distance prior to this. Sport for girls in school was limited enough. I did play rounders for O'Dempseys and am happy to say I have an All-Ireland medal for rounders from the community games in the late 80's. I also played some basketball in secondary school.

In 2012 I started to run with some members of St. Michaels and engaged with John Bolton (True Fitness) on developing a marathon plan. I told John I wanted to run a goal of 3:30. John worked out a 12 week plan to suit me for this projected time. I ran 3:28 on the day. Throughout the entire programme of training, I never sustained any injuries.

I concentrated on running only for the next few years – running such races as Amsterdam Marathon as well as many 5K's and 10K's around the country.

I decided to take up triathlon as my husband John was involved with Trilogy. I was also getting more injury niggles with the running only, so triathlon was the next challenge. I jumped into Triathlon in 2019, signing up to the Try-a-Tri in Ennis. Not having any swimming background and being nervous of open water it was a little daunting. Nevertheless, I actually won that race! The cycling and running I had done for years really stood to me. That same year, on the club weekend away in Dunganran I completed my first sprint Triathlon. This was my first ever sea swim and first ever non-stop 750M swim. I won my age category that day.

Looking at the results from the races I have completed I can see my strengths are running and cycling. My stats would place me in the top percentages post races while my swimming and transitions need a lot of focus. I find the swimming a challenge. While I can now swim for longer times and have no major issue in open water swimming I need to work on my technique.

I like the variety that each race brings. Each triathlon has its own challenge: rough sea swims, hilly bike courses, twisty, hilly runs, mucky transitions, trying to find my bike, triathlon has it all!!

My biggest learning this year was not walking a transition area in advance of the race. I lost valuable time in T1 in Dunganran this year by not being able to find my bike efficiently.

Work commitments don't suit the bulk of trilogy sessions but one that I was able to get to regularly was the cycle sessions with Mick Scully. Along with these sessions and the long Sunday cycles with Kieran, Paddy, Mark and John throughout lockdown really strengthened my biking abilities.

The club race series are great club events to focus and target. Again, work and family commitments reduce the number of events I can get to, but it is great to toe the line with fellow club members.

I have signed up for 70.3 Ironman Cork. My goal is to train hard and race harder. No Limits. Catch John Corcoran. But above all enjoy each and every moment of it.





WINTER EDITION: RECOMMENDED READS

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

BORN TO RUN : A HIDDEN TRIBE, SUPERATHLETES, AND THE GREATEST RACE THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN

AUTHOR CHRISTOPHER MCDUGALL - REVIEW BY NIAL KAVANAGH

Though this book was brought out in 2009, it still is a great read and will inspire you to run and run long distances. It puts forward the theory that humans used the ability to run to chase down faster animals, not with speed but with endurance and persistence. When this book first came out it inspired a lot of ultra-runners and changes to running shoe technology. What seemed radical thinking in 2009 is now more mainstream.

“Full of incredible characters, amazing athletic achievements, cutting-edge science, and, most of all, pure inspiration, Born to Run is an epic adventure that began with one simple question: Why does my foot hurt? In search of an answer, Christopher McDougall sets off to find a tribe of the world’s greatest distance runners and learn their secrets, and in the process shows us that everything we thought we knew about running is wrong.

Isolated by the most savage terrain in North America, the reclusive Tarahumara Indians of Mexico’s deadly Copper Canyons are custodians of a lost art. For centuries they have practiced techniques that allow them to run hundreds of miles without rest and chase down anything from a deer to an Olympic marathoner while enjoying every mile of it. Their superhuman talent is matched by uncanny health and serenity, leaving the Tarahumara immune to the diseases and strife that plague modern existence. With the help of Caballo Blanco, a mysterious loner who lives among the tribe, the author was able not only to uncover the secrets of the Tarahumara but also to find his own inner ultra-athlete, as he trained for the challenge of a lifetime: a fifty-mile race through the heart of Tarahumara country pitting the tribe against an odd band of Americans, including a star ultramarathoner, a beautiful young surfer, and a barefoot wonder.

With a sharp wit and wild exuberance, McDougall takes us from the high-tech science labs at Harvard to the sun-baked valleys and freezing peaks across North America, where ever-growing numbers of ultrarunners are pushing their bodies to the limit, and, finally, to the climactic race in the Copper Canyons. Born to Run is that rare book that will not only engage your mind but inspire your body when you realize that the secret to happiness is right at your feet, and that you, indeed all of us, were born to run.”



WINTER EDITION: RECOMMENDED READS - PART 2

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

RELENTLESS ; THE SECRETS OF THE SPORTING ELITE.

AUTHOR ALISTAIR BROWNLEE - REVIEW BY STEVEN BREW

Synopsis of the book: Over the last 4 years Alistair has been on a journey to learn from the best, talking to elite sports people from many type of sports as well as leading scientist. He does this in order to understand what makes these remarkable individuals such as Ronnie O Sullivan, Denis Irwin, Stuart Lancaster and Mark Webber to rise to the very top and push the limits of human capability in their pursuit for sporting perfection.

My review of the book:

Having been a fan of Alistair Brownlee, when I heard he had a book out I automatically thought it would be just about triathlon. Wrong!!! This book is literally about the sacrifices elite people make to get to the top of the their sport including how they feed off a crowd.

Alistair mentions Ironman Cork as being a highlight of his career. It's literally amazing what people do to stay on top, not just the fact they don't go to social events with friends or all the training they do, they literally think of nothing else other than the sport. I found it fascinating to see how the mind of an elite sports person works.

Who this is suited for:

This book is suited to anyone that wants to improve their game. It delves into the mindset you need to get there, not just the sacrifices you make but your friends and family too. If you're interested in how the mind works this book is also very interesting in the sense that what these people do to overcome problems. For example, Shane Williams being told he was too small to play rugby, to becoming probably one of the best rugby players in the world, when he was at his best. You gain a knowledge of how to get your mind around obstacles in the pursuit of greatness in your sport, whether your a jockey, rugby player, cyclist, hockey player or soccer player.



RACE REPORT LOUGH CUTRA BY DEREK MEADE

Event Distance – Sprint Plus - Swim-800m, Cycle-40k, Run-8k.

So when the alarm went at 4am on September 11th a brief thought flashed in my mind about why a supposedly sane adult would want to get up at this ungodly hour and drive across the country to put themselves through a world of hurt. Thankfully, I didn't dwell on that thought and instead dove straight into race mode and after a quick breakfast and with the car already pre-packed I was on the road by 4.45am.

Only a few weeks earlier, with the late cancellation of Tri-Athy, which would have been my only triathlon of the year, I, along with fellow Trilogy member Mark Sythes decided to have a crack at this Sprint Plus distance. A bit more than your regular sprint and just a bit less than an Olympic. However, by the end of the day we had convinced ourselves it was more or less an Olympic given the difficulty of the course and the longer than expected swim. More on that in a bit.

Just to set the scene. I have only done one Tri-Laois and one Try-Athy, two years previously. Not exactly a massive backlog of experience but this Triathlon thing has a real habit of making you a lot more stubborn and competitive than usual and I was determined not to let Covid destroy the year completely, nor was I going to let the small matter of mashing myself around a tree in the Slieve Blooms only a few weeks previously stop me from getting one triathlon under my belt this year.

So onto the event. All of the pre-race info and race briefings were conducted remotely online which I have to say worked very well. The website had all the course and race info and very little was omitted. The whole Castle race series seems very well run and certainly takes in some stunning locations.

Our race was due to kick off at 8am. After ditching the car around an hour earlier, in what can only be described as an “interesting” and “challenging” route into the car park area, the registration process was seamless and in no time we were assembling our gear in transition in the shadow of the stunning castle and beside a beautiful glassy and calm lake. The adrenalin was building. It looked like our race had about 70+ competitors. My first thought was how fit everyone looked and what the hell was I doing in the middle of all these fine specimens of triathlete. Anyway no time to dwell on that and before long Mark and I were suited up on the shore of the lake ready for the start.

The weather was dull and grey but not cold and apparently the water was a lovely 15 degrees.





RACE REPORT **LOUGH CUTRA** **BY DEREK MEADE**

I saw the swim buoys disappearing in the distance and saw a red and white one not too far away which I hoped would be the turnaround point but alas our turnaround was a good bit beyond that. So far, in fact, that I could barely see it and I thought I must be in the wrong race. Ah well, no turning back now.

There was a 5 second gap between swimmers as we headed out. I hung to the back as swimming is my big mental block and is a nut I just haven't managed to crack yet despite the best efforts and encouragement from our own brilliant Eimear Matthews.

The water was lovely and there was no initial cold shock and I knocked out the first 100 metres or so confidently. However I took a break and made the mistake of looking at all the other triathletes disappearing into the distance and suddenly all the doubts came flooding back. For the next 20 minutes or so all I can say is that it was one of the biggest sporting mental battles of my life as I tried to churn out blocks of 25 and 50 metre bursts before treading water to recover. All the time my fellow competitors were disappearing from view. I even managed to find a new best friend as one of the safety crew in a kayak shadowed me and we struck up a great conversation for the remainder of the swim. I'm pretty sure you shouldn't have time to have full blown conversations during a race but believe me I was thankful Mr. Kayak was there as he kept me calm and I just kept plugging away.

At one point I could hear the announcer back at the castle saying the next race was ready to hit the water only to also hear, "Oh we still have a swimmer in the water from the last wave. Oh dear, it looks like they are going the wrong way". Yeah pretty sure that was me he was talking about but I was kind of heading the right way back, sort of.

Anyway terra firma, I had done it! Swim complete. I proudly exited the water in 71st place out of 71 competitors but a place ahead of those who did not start! Believe me this was a victory, 31 minutes (yikes) for 1000m. No way was it the advertised 800m. A few checks after with fellow competitors confirmed Garmin was telling us all it was 1k. When I had done Try Athy I didn't even put my head under the water and was disgusted with myself, so this was a moral victory for me.

So now it was onto the bike. My favourite discipline and a good 40k giving me a chance to make up some ground. I was buzzing now that the swim was done and exited transition with renewed energy. The route took in a paved road out of the castle grounds before hitting the Clare and Galway roads for what would be two 20km loops. Unfortunately, the weather had turned nasty and heavy rain started to fall, making the road quite greasy. The route wasn't overly hilly but did have a few sharp short hills that needed more power getting up them and a lot of care on the descents. There were some nice flat long sections allowing you to get onto the tri-bars and put the power down. Unfortunately, a nasty headwind appeared on the straight sections which was unwelcome but nonetheless I started picking off a few fellow competitors giving me a boost in confidence. Whisper it carefully but this was actually becoming enjoyable!

A last minute decision to add the tri-bars was a good decision and I finished the 40k in 1 hour 22 minutes. Happy enough considering the difficult conditions and my tribulations in the water. I also managed to get myself up 21 places from last place to 50th.



RACE REPORT

LOUGH CUTRA

BY DEREK MEADE

Now back to transition I just thought go and enjoy the run even if it's a slow jog treat it as a victory lap and enjoy the scenery and the support of the marshals etc. Oh my God how wrong was !! The run can only be described as pure torture with a sprinkle of pain and suffering topped off with a dollop of "this is ridiculous!!!"

Straight out of transition you were confronted with short sharp slippery and mucky hills up through a forest trail where you had to dodge massive tree roots and rocks protruding from every angle ready to nip at your ankles and put you on your backside. With the legs still in bike mode this was a horrific start to the run. A fellow competitor came alongside determined to have a chat. I just wanted to lie down and die. My legs were burning and my lungs were bursting. Coming out of the forest of doom we then had to traverse a cowfield with all the expected droppings and lots of holes and hollows and of course it was all uphill. Yeah sure just finish us off completely!

After the hell of the 'forest of the broken ankles' and the 'field of the massive cowpats' I emerged onto a stony track taking me back towards the castle and was greeted by a host of marshals of all ages, some of whom were massively enthusiastic, but I have to say their support and encouragement was exactly what I needed and all of sudden the legs and lungs started working just that bit better. The loop finished through the castle courtyards and past the front of the castle. It was stunning and the buzz around there was excellent despite the massively reduced crowds due to Covid.

Slight drawback was the thought of doing the run loop again but somehow it was fine. Maybe knowing what was ahead allowed the mind to prepare the body and after getting through the forest and fields for the second time I allowed myself relax and enjoy the run in. As I headed up the finishing straight in front of the castle I was disappointed I had no one to race. I put the afterburners on anyway and also that special face you do at the end of races. The one that suggests that it's all grand and this triathlon lark is a handy gig. Yeah pure BS. Anyway I finished the run in 47 minutes and had a total time of 2 hours 55 minutes. I had got up to 48th position of 71 after emerging from the water in last place. I'll tell my friends I finished top 50. They don't need to know how many entered. I was ecstatic! I had done a proper triathlon coming back from a recent injury and conquering the open water swim which was my Achilles heel. I was immensely proud and delighted to be flying the Trilogy colours along with Mark who finished a few places ahead of me in his first triathlon. A fantastic achievement for Mark also and we told each other how great we were far too many times. We hung on to support fellow club member Mark Pierce who completed the Try-a-Tri earning another high finish while we also spotted another clubmate Damien Oliver who blasted through the Aqua-bike event.



Within half an hour myself and Mark had convinced ourselves we were going to tackle "The Gauntlet" on this course next year. That's a half ironman by the way. Watch this space.



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