

IRONMAN -UK-  
Sherbourne  
3.8k swim-180k bike-42k run  
August 20<sup>th</sup> 2006

After 10 years of triathlon, the time had come to move up and "go long", following a 12 months break without triathlon (following the bad experience of "Big Half at Stoke"). 8 months of Running, biking and swimming, (which included the London marathon), came down to one day on the 20<sup>th</sup> August at Sherbourne

#### The Swim. (3.8k)

4am, finish eating my Shreddies and peek out the tent. "Result", no mist. Last years race was delayed by 2 hours following early morning mist which was the undoing of several athletes. The nervous 20 minute walk from the tent to transition was impressively lit with portable lighting; especially important as the walk had to incorporate a couple of toilet stops. Check the bike, drinks bottles on the bike, food in place, another toilet stop and Wetsuit on and queue to enter the water for the deep water mass start. Hair standing up on the back of the neck as I trudged to the lake entry for an early morning splash around. No going back now!

"OGI, OGI, OGI" - "OI, OI, OI" the chant of over 1200 athletes echoed.

6am, claxon went, and the start of 2 swims laps. What a scrum, kicks and slaps being delivered and received as each person fought for their own space. By the second lap things had settled down, but there was still the odd numpty that couldn't swim straight, zig zagging across everyone. Swim time 1 hour 14 minutes-a good time for me, would have been a lot quicker if more space was available, even so, not disappointed.

#### The Bike

Morning was overcast and still, which suited me because I have a particular hatred for the wind (the weather!). Other athletes and press reports comment on how the bike section is particularly tough, some quoting that they found it harder than Lanzarote (I have cycled in Lanzarote and the hills are scary). They were right, how they can call the bike route undulating is beyond me, its effin hilly!! Would you call Charnwood hills race undulating?

Following the first two laps (74 miles-ish) i had managed to keep to my target of finishing sub 6 hours, averaging 19mph ish, man and beast were performing well. But on the final lap it happened, my worst fear, the wind picked up strong and was in our faces for the final 30 miles and with the repeated hill climbing I started to have severe energy crash. As a result, a steady session to T2 was needed to recover and to prepare for the marathon, eating and drinking appropriately on the way. Bike time 6 hours 18 minutes-this was disappointing as

I was desperate to get under 6 hours, and even though I did train for an "undulating course" it was harder than I expected (I will know next time)

#### The Run

The run started as a real interesting scenic route. Following tracks around Sherbourne castle and the town centre, the first 13 miles being covered in less than 2 hours. The run route then changed and involved 2 laps of the A30 near to Yeovil (yawn yawn). Plain dual carriageway, on a warm afternoon, which again in their words was undulating (yeah right!). The constant tarmac and "undulating hills" making a very testing final half marathon, physically and psychologically. I managed to run for the whole of the distance, having the occasional short walk at feed stations to regain composure. The feed stations were very well managed; coke, water, sports drink and food were in place every 1.5 miles. Run Time 4 hours 34 minutes-the run time was a surprise when I crossed the finish line; psychologically it felt as if I had took 5-6 hours. I had no idea of the time as I don't wear a watch when I run.

The trek into the finish, as any other Ironman Event Finishers will know is a nerve jangling, inspiring and life changing event. After finishing races such as London Tri & London Marathon nothing comes close as you run down the carpet past the grandstand to the finish thro a sea of noise. They make every finisher feel special. I can honestly say it was worth every bit of training and worth every penny.

Total time 12 hours 18 minutes-I aimed to ensure that I finished under 13 hours in planning for the race. I managed it and felt as if I could have gone quicker-we will see next time. It is an appropriate time to say thanks to one person who has made it possible-Jennie. Over the past 9 months of training for the London marathon then Ironman she has given support (not all the time!-most of the time!) being patient while being out late at night and the 4am morning starts. Thanks.