

UK Ironman

19<sup>th</sup> August 2007

2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26 mile run

After completing the UK Ironman in 2006 (12 hours 18 minutes), and having a great experience, I said that because of the "Soul-less" run on the dual carriage way I would not do it again.

Guess what-I did it again.

I entered the race late this year through the waiting list following a change of heart (addiction really). This left a shorter training period than last year and with the mingling weather we have had this summer did not make it any easier. Although a difficult target, the main aim of this race was to finish under 12 hours.

Swim

Its 2am, I am laying on my back watching the tent lick from side to side, and heavy rain is lashing. I eat my Weetabix and have a coffee and sit there till 4am waiting to make the long walk to transition. Here we go! Check the bike, pump the tyres, drinks bottles on, food in place, jelly beans ready, Wetsuit on and queue for the toilets, then onto 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.

6am approached, then 6.05am, then 6.10am the start claxon went at 6.20am delayed for some reason and some of us had been treading water for 20-30 minutes waiting. The claxon went and 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 10 minutes-great time-5 minutes quicker than last year, and would have been a lot quicker if more space was available, fat boys can swim!

The Bike

I have a particular hatred for the wind (weather!), and today was bad. The bike section is particularly tough and with the wind I was not in a good mood. I even deliberately left my ear plugs in after the swim to give a bit of comfort.

First lap (37miles) averaged 19.5 mph-ish, with the hill climbing that was a great time, and then it went wrong. On the bike course there is a very steep downhill section and on the second lap at about 60 miles (45mph) someone fell off-ouch.

This guy was laying half in the road and half in a hawthorn bush screaming for help-so I stopped (ain't I good). He was in a bad way. I stayed with him giving him some basic help and comfort until paramedics attended stabilising his neck. I have since found out that he has had a 30cm titanium rod fitted to his upper neck because of crushed vertebrae, if anyone is interested I have e-mails from Iltud (French) explaining his injuries.

I carried on after and finished the Bike in 6 hours 22 minutes-this was disappointing but it couldn't be helped. I was desperate to get under 6 hours for the bike; I did it in 6.18 in 2006 which was not so bad.

## The Run

The run starts as a real interesting scenic route. Following tracks around Sherbourne castle and the town, the first 13 miles being covered in less than 2 hours, if I kept this up I would be in for a sub 12 hours. The run route then changes and involves 2 laps of the A30 near to Yeovil (yawn). The constant tarmac and "undulating hills" making a very testing final half marathon, physically and psychologically, the road is also still open to traffic! After pumping endless jelly beans down my neck I had managed to keep pace for a sub 4 hour marathon. I managed to finish in 3 hours 57 mins.

The trek into the finish, as any other Ironman Event Finishers will know is a nerve jangling, inspiring and life changing event, and no one can understand that until they have completed one. After finishing races such as London Tri & London Marathon nothing comes close as you run down the carpet to the finish thro the noise. They make every finisher feel special. I managed to finish in a total time of 11 hours 40 minutes.

It was cool also to see other members from the club over the weekend, although there for their own reasons, the support and smiles were welcome, thanks. My biggest hope is that I will do a big race in good weather one day, London marathon, half Ironman UK, full Ironman UK I have never done one in the sun-its always effin wet and windy

## The year of the bean-07

2006 was the year of the jelly baby, 2007 was the year of the jelly bean.

Beans are:

- easier to carry, they don't stick together like the babies
- easier to chew, they don't stick to ur gums so bad
- easier to swallow, especially when choking while running
- easier to spit, especially when cut up on a bike
- They rattle a good rhythm when running.

So what is 2008 going to be? Any suggestions?

UPDATE—Wine Gums.