



Trentham Gardens Lake

Trentham Big Half Ironman Distance Triathlon Race Report

Last Sunday I completed my 2nd Half Ironman of the year! It was the Trentham Big Half Ironman Triathlon – 2k swim, 56 mile bike, 13.1 mile run. The sun was shining and it was seriously hot.....just the way I like it! Mmmmm I had a good race (even with my normal slow swim!), finishing 26th overall!!(11th in Age Group) How pleased am I, woohoooo!! Well that is tinged with massive disappointment as I was slightly over well 47 seconds over my Sub 5hr goal. GUTTED.

There were 2 other Work Colleagues competing: Jase Walkley and Mark Saggs. With Jase finishing 7th overall (2nd in age group) and Mark finishing 4thth overall (Age Group Winner), Brilliant results all round.

What follows is the normal race dissection – interesting to some, but probably boring to others!

The swim, being 2k, was slightly longer than the normal 1.9k. It was 4 laps too, which is strange. T1 was about 600m from the swim exit and we had to have trainers to wear for the run to transition. I never feel totally smooth in the water and I tried in vane to catch some draft off faster swimmers. At least I avoided getting bashed or going off course. As I came out of the water I stopped my watch at 39:30. I tutted at what was another slow swim! But great for me my swim times our coming down this year(Thanks Jen) I stumbled into my trainers and shouted at my mother to get my wetsuit for me, didn't fancy running the 600m with it on unlike others. Think my tactic was better as I flew past them, on way to T1

Into T1 and a smooth transition saw me onto the bike ok. I had cycled the bike previously before as this is home for me. Much of it was on dual carriage way but it was by no means flat. 'Rolling' would be a good description. With 3 laps to complete, it was easy to see some of the faster swimmers ahead. At the 10 mile point I clocked Jase and Mark going the other way on the dual carriageway – oh dear! They seemed a long way ahead! I concentrated on smooth but hard pedalling and started to pass rather a lot of riders. I had a nutrition strategy unlike Bala I had my food and gel on me but as I felt a bit nauseous every time I tried to eat, I was not able to eat half of

what I had planned.....eek! Thoughts of blowing up crept into my head and I made a conscious effort not to go into the red zone on the hills. This was not going to happen because at the end of the 1st lap my Carbon seat post decided to slip. I had to stop and fix in the don't want to lose any time mode, I just made matters worse as I fumbled around dropped things etc. Anyway seat post roughly at height it should be and into lap2, on the second lap the Big Half riders were mingled in with the Olympic Distance competitors and it became hard to see who was racing which distance. I was happy enough, though, as I was carving through all ahead of me. Trying again not to get carried away and gain back the time I had lost. Towards the end of lap 2 I could see my seat post slipping down again. Oh the filth that was no coming out of my mouth never called myself or the trusty Fort those names before. I had to stop I could not ride another lap like this. A quicker remedy this time. Not a good move my seat post was way too high and I could not get a full pedal stroke. But I was not stopping again. Especially with my family down cheering me on and my goal of sub 5 hrs. I resisted the temptation to over do it as I wanted to feel good going in to the run.

Into T2 and a fairly smooth transition, helped by my family standing where my bike was to be racked. Straight into the run which was a 4 lap affair around the lake and into the forest; with a horrid little hill half way round, near a feed station so it became known as Bastard Gatorade Hill... anyway out of T2 where Jase girlfriend and my family gave me a big cheer which helped. I had decided after my episode at Bala that I would go steady on run and try for a negative split but I felt surprisingly 'perky'. With 4 laps making up the half marathon, Jase and Mark crossed as they completed their first loop. They looked good. I had expected to be down on these 2 overall by 20 mins ish so this was going as expected. As I completed my first lap, the support I was getting was helping. Still feeling ok, I eased into the 2nd lap slightly faster. I was taking one sip of water and one sip of Gatorade every lap. As the 3rd lap started, I could feel the heat and that my legs were getting tired. I tried to keep positive, but I think I was slowing. This lap I took no refreshments as not to waste valuable seconds. As the 4th lap began I was feeling worse and completed my slowest loop. I knew this was going to be close to the 5hr mark and was really trying to pick my legs up and get going but there was nothing there. They were ok at the pace I was going which was not slow as I was picking people off all the time. As I was 200m from the line realisation set in and I was not going to beat the 5hr goal, trying not to beat myself up about it I then concentrated on finishing what was going to be a top 30 place out of 200+ starters. A sub – 1:45 run time was mine and I finished feeling tired and half-dead! The run course was 95% on gravel-type track and the final run in on tarmac. Once on the tarmac, it felt great and traction gave an extra burst of speed that made me realise that the course may not be that fast.

All in all, it was a good event. Having completed my 2nd half in a cracking time and finishing in a great place on the hottest day of the year I had to take heart from this result. The Scotland leg of my tour next up on 16/08/08 and I will not be going for Sub 5hr here as its all hills. Despite my lack of bike prep (Novice mistake) taking time out of my sub 5hr goal. Twit, I was pleased I had maintained the effort levels constant throughout the race. However, at Aberfeldy I will be putting this to good use as I will not be beasting them hills on the bike leg. My trusty Fort will not be making this Journey it will be the Carbon Felt with Tri Bars attached all ready for them hills. I will be trying to improve my run time on this leg.