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TRIBULL

October 2012



Gavin demonstrates how to shout your way to a PB

The Editor Says

Phil Parr-Burman



What I like about Triathlon is that there's always something to learn. There's always technique to improve on, but there's more to it than that. This season, for me, the penny has finally dropped that to do a good race you have to get the pacing right. (and yes, you'd think that during 12 years of more or less uninterrupted training and racing that would have happened by now!). Swimming was always my stongest discipline so I'd go all out, wanting to post a good time. As my cycling improved over the years the same thing began to happen there. The result was that the run came to be a sufferfest, with disappointing times. Even within the swim and the cycle I'd start too hard and end up tired and slowing

down, especially in the swim people would be coming past me in the last third. But my best races, and the most enjoyable ones, have always been when I was more measured. The problem is how to get that pacing right so you don't take it too easy—and that's difficult.

This season I've also worked out how to get rid of the running shoe smell. You know that acrid one that you get after a few runs where mud, or no socks, is involved. Washing in the washing machine doesn't work too well. Soaking in diluted vinegar (a web search revealed that one) doesn't do it either. Just soak them for a couple of hours in water with a couple of squirts of bleach, rinse (or put them in the washing machine on a short wash) and dry.

Finally—thanks to all the authors in this issue for a good bumper crop of stuff. There's a lot of racing going on out there—lets all hear about it!

Ask Audrey

Audrey



"Dear Audrey. I think the physio taped up look is so cool. Is it acceptable to wear the tape even though I don't have an injury? Do you know where I can get sequinned tape? Or should it just be purple?"

Dear Sir/Madam,

Audrey's investigations have shown there to be a fine line between authentic looking physio tape (picture 1), and physio tape as body art (picture 2)! Wear fashion physio tape if you will, but a few conditions: (i) at least fake an associated injury/weak joint, (ii) make sure you tape up the same arm/leg each time (iii) drop the sequins idea, you'll look like a mobile disco ball and the chafing implications don't bear thinking about.

Yours,

Audrey



Addendum

Tribull apologises to Andrew McMenigall for missing off most of the last paragraph of his article on Midlothian in the last issue. Due to some rather poor image placement it was covered up, so here it is.....

The only ET that I did not see, or was not aware of seeing was Lizann. Who I believe successfully completed her first triathlon. Here's to many more to follow. In all, for the observant amongst you there was 18 of us competing, and 18 to

finish. Well done to the early and late starters who managed to successfully miss the winter weather. For those of us in the middle, a bigger congratulations, for successfully completing your first winter triathlon!

Roll on Lochore, where there will be even more purple warriors on the loose. The weather can only get better!



Seonaid and Jim, who both raced across the Forth.



NVA's Speed of Light

Richard Kirby



I think Francesca forwarded on an email about this event, needing experienced hill runners. It sounded intriguing so I decided to sign up, despite the fact that as a runner you were expected to pay for the privilege! Still, it was only a tenner I think. So what is it - in a nutshell it is a nighttime show held below Arthur's Seat where the dance troop are fell runners dressed in light suits, running in a choreographed sequence of routes intersecting and diverging other runners, to create an active work of art. Meanwhile the audience members would be walked up to Arthur's Seat, and then back down again - holding light sticks so that they could also be a part of the performance.

I got accepted to a training evening in June. This was a way to learn more about the event, try out a light suit and run one or two of the routes and movement sequences. The light suit turned out to be an exoskeleton of velcro straps for the arms and legs, and a harness for the torso supporting a battery pack that sat in the small of your back. A safety head torch was included. LED strips were sewn into the various straps and parts of the exoskeleton. It turned out that they were controlled by radio, so they could be turned on or off, show different colours, and different flashing sequences. We also carried in a shoulder holster, a wee tube that could be held and shaken to give a strobe effect from a single right LED.



The training started with a warmup and demonstration of some hand signals to indicate change of direction, or specific patterns of movement. Arms waving up and down meant stop, for example. We then set off to try one of the routes. There were 6 or 7 routes in total I think, with each team of up to 15 runners assigned a route. The route might cover lots of the hill, or might do lots of loops around a smallish part of the hill. With some up and down hills on the grassy slopes, proper off-road shoes were recommended. The fitness level of my fellow team members covered all ranges, from those who had never run off road, to experienced fell-runners. Initially the organisers hoped to recruit experienced mountain goat type runners who could run up and down all day long. However, doing the maths, of 30 odd nights, with 6-7 teams of up to 15 runners in each team, twice over (each team would swap with a fresh team half way through), meant that the reality was they had to take whomever was mad enough to want to do it! So, timings were adjusted to allow for slower runners, and the choreography could even survive people walking up hill. We started the training session in daylight, but dusk was nearly over by the time a 2nd team arrived, and we practiced changing light suits on the hillside in the dwindling light.

After training, I signed up for the night of the 17th August. Being a Friday I didn't have to think about getting up for work the next day - the show would go on until about 1.30am each day, starting at 9ish! As I mentioned earlier this was on for a month, every night, associated with the Olympics London 2012 Festival. Despite the late start, as a runner we had to turn up at 6pm. I left work early, got home and then ran to the event site behind Holyrood Palace. After signing on and being assigned a team (I was going to be in the 2nd lot of teams), I sat around chatting until 7 when as a team we went out and rehearsed the hand signals and moves again. Then we had about a couple of hours to wait until showtime - meanwhile the first set of teams were getting suited up and ready to go. The audience started arriving around 9 - they were assigned a group every 15 minutes, and led along a route, that included ascending to the top of Arthur's Seat. Finally we set off as a team, with safety bibs and a head torch, to be led onto the hill to meet the previous team ready to swap their light suit for our yellow fluorescents. It was quite a mild night

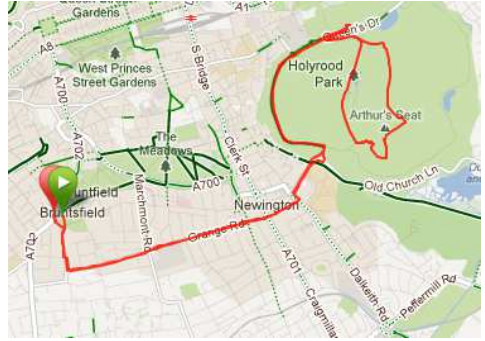
with a hint of showers.



Our route was fairly concentrated and didn't offer a lot of variety of moves. At one point we stopped and the choreographer remotely turned off our suit lights - except mine. Apparently I was in a spot out of radio range! The idea was to take out the wee tube and shake it - giving an impression of lots of small flashing lights all over the hillside. Still my suit was not playing ball, but who knows if the audience at that point noticed or even realised - that's art for you! Later as we ran down a steep slippery slope, the person 2 in front of me fell and badly hurt her wrist. Her husband was directly behind her, so when I reached them, he asked me to look after her, whilst he ran back up to one of the meeting points where medics and support staff hung around. The rest of the runners in my team went on past until the tail end charlie caught up and sent me on (each team had 2 leaders, one at each end of the line, who had radio pieces and were told the timings to keep to). After we got back to the next Hub (one of the meeting points were teams would come together before going off again on their own routes), we heard that she was being taken to A&E - and since it was late Friday night, obviously her husband went with her.

The route my team did was fairly tame, compared to some. Apart from the steep slope which we went down a couple of times, there was a fair bit of level running, lots of stopping and not a lot of "fancy" moves. One of the more interesting moves that other teams did was called the Fire-fly - this was where the team would start in a huddle, and then in sub teams of 2 or 3 would sprint out in different directions for about 10 meters, and then come back. You can imagine the visible effect of light pulsing out and back. Another move was called the lighthouse - we had done that in training. Basically sticking your

arms out horizontally and then slowly rotating - not so easy on a slope!

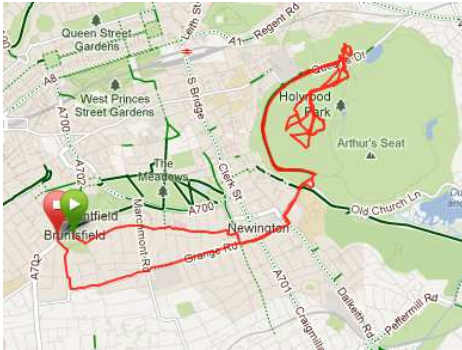


We eventually finished at 1.30am, and after divesting myself of the light suit, I jogged back home for a well-earned shower and bed. The last of the audience clapped us off the hill which was a nice touch.

The audience cost was £25, but of course you could go up the hill for free. I decided on the final day of the show to see it from the audience's point of view, so headed to the Hub to buy my ticket. Again I ran over to the park, but this time to be an audience member - different entrance! There were about 30 of us for the time slot we had. 4 guides were allocated, 1 at each end and 2 roving. The audience light sticks were handed out - more like staffs really. There was a diffused light tip at the bottom, and the top of the staff would flash if shaken. It would also make a noise as we climbed. We set off at a very sedate walking pace, pausing often to view the show as it unfolded on the hillside around us. We followed the main path between Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat until reaching the base of the hill. A long pause here to view the show from low level - including 1 team of runners running past us - eerily with almost no noise! Then we hiked up one of the zig-zag paths, with an occasional pause to look at the runners, and the unfolding city behind. The wind was quite strong though, and when we reached the flat bit just below the summit, it was quite difficult standing steady. This was the main viewing area - our light sticks were emitting a spooky tone which could be varied by waving the stick around, and by shaking to emit pulses of light we too became part of the show.

The finale for the audience was to go to the summit, where there was supposed to be a cabi-

net that we could slot in part of our light sticks, however due to the strength of the wind we were instead led back down via route round the back of Arthurs Seat - losing sight of the end of the show for a while. A final cheer for the runners as we reached Queens Drive and the teams started streaming off the hill, and then time to run back home again.



To be honest I don't think it was worth £25 for the audience, given that you could see the runners for free, and would just miss out on the lightstaff. Still, as a one-off it was interesting, and I am happy that I did both nights. I think though it needed more runners to really stand out - often the lights looked very wee compared to the large canvas of the hillside. It apparently cost £1m to design and implement the show - but the light suits and staffs are made now, and I believe the organisers have been approached by Rio for possibly repeating in 2016. Perhaps Glasgow should approach them too...

Richard

PS. The first photo of suiting up is by Sean Bell, and the 2nd is Toby Williams.

“Slow and Steady Wins the Race”

Liz Richardson



Editors apology: I missed this out of the last issue, but since the race was back in May Liz's article can remind you of those heady spring days when the season was full of promise.....

Midlothian Sprint Triathlon 6th May 2012

In 2010 the Midlothian Sprint Tri was my first ever triathlon, and was where I discovered, to my great relief, that I loved the sport! So I've participated for three consecutive years now, and it's become my home game. However, I must admit my preparation for the last two years has been quite light on training – the carb-loading and the tapering have been the only bits I've taken really seriously. After 2011 I knew I could get round without much training and without needing to have previously roused my fair-weather bike from its hibernation, which has

made me rather lazy. 2012 was to be the year that I started training again, but things* conspired against me to thwart this plan. (*things included dodgy plumbers, drinking buddies, my cat, something good on TV, and an über-comfy sofa).

My race was pretty unexceptional – I had a good swim with perfectly-paced lane buddies, jinxed the weather by saying I'd never been rained on during a triathlon,



and finished the run

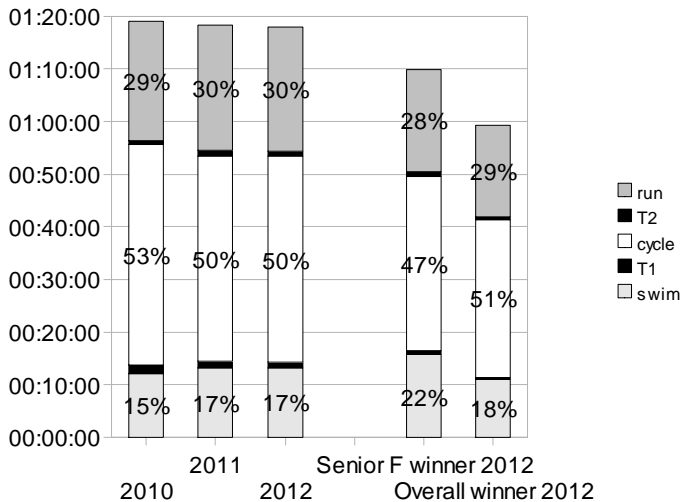


.....with a bit too much energy left, etc – but the results were eye-opening. It was my fastest time over this course (1:17:52) but also my *slowest* swim... while my *fastest* swim had contributed to my slowest time back in 2010 (1:19:06). I've always thought it a little unfortunate that the swim is the least important part of the race, in terms of time, as it's the discipline I'm most comfortable at. So it means I start with good all-rounders who leave me for dead once we get on the bikes, and by the time I get to the run I'm being over-taken by the next wave. To make up for this I've previously tried to swim as fast as possible... but I now realise this is not the best tactic for a race that's going to take well over an hour. It's cer-

tainly not rocket science, but it's taken me long enough to work it out!

Being a bit of a spoddy geek I have graphed my three races on this course (first three bars), as well as those of the winning senior female and the overall winner from this year. You can see that my overall time has decreased as my swim time has increased and taken up a greater proportion of my race. Still, I swam faster than the winning senior female this year, although she nailed me on the bike and run (by 6 mins and 4 mins, respectively). Interestingly my proportional breakdown was more similar to that of the overall winner (just 30% slower!) than that of the winning senior female. As I had a bit of energy left at the end I bet my swim time is quite nicely optimised now and there would be nothing to gain from going any slower. So it leaves me wondering what next in this little experiment? Is getting better at cycling the way forward? Given that Midlothian was my first outing on my trusty steed in 2012 maybe more time in the saddle would be useful...

Midlothian Sprint Triathlon breakdown



Olympic Adventure

John Whittaker



How did that happen? you may well ask.

I applied for a triathlon role with LOCOG way back at the start of the year. I had given up hope on getting anything when I got a phone call offering me a job with athletics for both sets of games. What happened to the triathlon job I asked, they are not filling it yet but the team would like you in the athletics role.

After consulting Mandy who would be on her own for ten weeks whilst I would be on a high in London I accepted the role. Excited to be getting involved in such a huge event I cleared it with work and set off to the big smoke.

The athletics team was set up in three distinct groups, one in the stadium (the technical team) one based at the stadium but covering the athletes village (athletes services) and my team which managed the training venues. There were 8 of us including Pauline our boss who had come from Alexandra Stadium, Birmingham. The rest of us were a mixed bag of folk with an event background and a sporting interest. Our venues were the stadium warm up track, Newham (Newham and Essex Beagles) athletics arena and Mayesbrooke Park. Each had to be set up with the equipment needed, first was the warm up track. So there we were standing around waiting for a truck to arrive with a vague idea that there would be a high jump bed or two and a couple of pole vault kits possibly coming in. Artic number one arrived, so like excited kids at Christmas we grabbed the delivery line. Everything that had been ordered was on the line; it can't all be on this truck? So let's just open it and see what there is.

I can't remember exactly the order but there were big mats and some metal work which had to be unloaded. The fork lift truck driver got on the case and got the stuff off with a few gentle persuasive nudges from us. Within half an hour the truck was unloaded and the driver amazed us all by turning the truck on itself, setting up a challenge for the rest of the drivers. James our logistics dude promised us some bodies to help the lugging that went on for the next while, still

waiting! We then unloaded another five trucks over the next day or so, all of the time guessing what might be arriving and never getting it right. The weather was ok at this time although not too hot. The boys in the team Paul, Adrian, Carlos, Jonathon and me were left to get to get on with the physical work and the girls Charlotte and Debbie were forced to stay in the office and do the admin stuff, not very happily it has to be said. Keith Davies the technical director appeared every now and again to add his tuppence worth into what we were doing, but his visits became less and less as he seemed to think we were capable of getting it done. To be honest Keith was a good guy to be around as he was a lets get it done kind of guy, no bugging around thinking about it.

Once we had the warm up track set up with hurdles, steeple chase barriers, starting blocks, more javelin, discus, shot and hammer than you could shake a stick at, poles (did you know there was a bendy side?) sand rakes, track cleaners, plasticine, squeegees, jump boards and the high and pole vault sets it was the weekend. The jump beds had to be built on a frame which was like a giant meccanno set. A few goes before we got it right but once we had it the camera phones were out so that we would know what to do the next time.

A well earned weekend off and a chance to be home with Mandy.

The next time wasn't far off as we had to do the same set up at the two other venues. More logistics support and some very creative problem solving made the week shoot past. Newham had to be set up over the next weekend and be ready by the Monday so no more time off before the start of the games for any of us.

The start of the training period for the games came with the start of our shift system; I was either working 6:00 to 2:30 or 2:00 till whenever. It also was the start of our volunteers arriving; we had about 150 in total shared across the three venues. Some amazing characters with some equally amazing stories and life experiences.

Getting to know the volunteers was great fun, some were more fun than others but on the whole I got on with most of them. They were unstinting in their efforts, never moaning (except about the food), always willing to do more than

needed, I have to say that is what I saw across the whole of London 2012. The teams started to arrive and unsurprisingly the warm up track was the busiest of the venues, it didn't help that in the first week there were problems with the transport to the venues; 10 minutes to the warm up track or uncertain times to the other venues was an easy choice. But in the first few days Nevis and St Kitts set up camp at the warm up track, Kim Collins coaching their athletes was a joy to watch. Grenada set up in Newham with Kirani James the main man, the volunteer team were trying to sell his ice bath water. Ethiopia decided that Mayesbrooke would be their home, it was a lovely park and Bekele seemed to enjoy his time there, very much a gentleman. We shared Mayesbrooke with Handball during the Olympics and there were some interesting sights to be seen. Jonathon was particularly taken by the Norwegian womens team. I only saw the Serbian and Bosnian mens team but what a fast paced game.

I bought myself a cheap bike from Decathlon to get around on and it was a good idea; as for 99 pounds I was able to avoid the tube and DLR. There were loads of bikes around London; lots of them respectful of the lights etc. but loads that were not. The venues were on cycle routes which were much easier than the transport system, so I could save the fares and that paid for the bike.

We had a visit from the flame relay at Mayesbrooke which was cool, but the person who was supposed to get the change over on the track didn't turn up so the guy coming in had to do two legs, there was a queue of volunteers to take it on which was ignored unfortunately. The sun came out as the training period started and sunscreen was the order of the day.

The teams kept on coming in and the Jamaicans

arrived on the Thursday before the opening ceremony, the track was buzzing with athletes and Asafa Powell looked like the man as he walked onto the track. He always worked on the home straight with his coaching team camping around the 100 start line. Omega arrived to set up the electronic start system which meant our volunteers were going to be able to live off "I started" Olympic champions in the pub for years to come. Usain and Yohan did their stuff on the back straight, every athlete on the track though stopped to look whenever Bolt came out to play.

I think I started to get a blasé about the superstars being around and stopped noticing them as we were just so busy. I did notice Oscar Pistorius as he is a bit of a hero really.

I was working at the warm up track on the day of the opening ceremony and got a call from the stadium manager to say there were tickets available for us if we wanted to go to the ceremony. Not a bad deal to start with so the team rolled up to Canary Wharf for a drink and something to eat before heading back to the stadium for the evening. Amazing show with some really nuts stuff fitting together seamlessly. TBC.

Mandy arrived down for a week so I had a few days off to be with her. We were both lucky as Keira phoned to ask if Mandy wanted Freya's ticket for the evening session, I had been offered a seat with my accreditation so we could both have a night in the stadium. We met up with Facundo our Spanish Rugby star friend, he was over in London for a few days and let me know that he has just been contracted to the sevens squad full-time which was brilliant news. Made for a good day start which just continued to get better as the day went on.

Challenge Barcelona

Lisa Magennis

Arrived in Barcelona late on Friday night and was greeted by torrential rain which continued well into the next day. Roads were completely flooded as I drove the cycle route and the rain showed no sign of easing. Thankfully the next

morning looked a bit drier as I munched my 5am pre race breakfast. Everything seemed to have fallen into place and I was almost looking forward to the race...

All went smoothly in the swim, it was only my second open water swim of the season but I managed to come out of the water in good time - 1st in my age group and 4th non-professional female.

Conditions were perfect for the cycle – sun was out and the roads were closed to traffic. Life was

good. 31kms into the cycle, my front tyre punctured. Fixed it and carried on. 32.5kms in, my back tyre punctured. At that stage it was looking likely that all the effort I had put into training for the previous 6 months was in vain, I had no more inner tubes and my brand new tyres were clearly made of tissue paper...

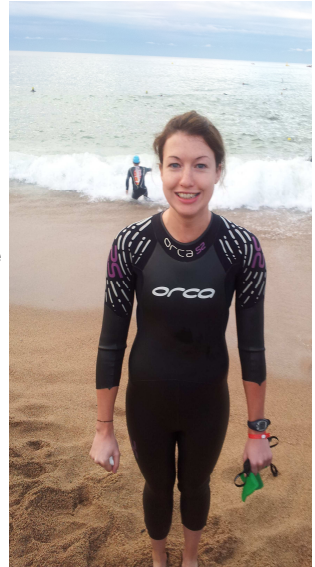
I somehow made it to the 60km point with pretty soft tyres and spotted my brother with my emergency bag containing 2 more inner tubes. After another 5kms I had made it to the maintenance stand and had my tyres inflated with a track pump. All was good again.

At 69kms my front wheel punctured for the second time. At 90kms I saw my brother again and he had mended one of my punctured inners (in the toilets of the train station with electrical tape and superglue!). By some miracle I had managed to get myself to the 163km mark a few hours later, then a slow puncture. At 177km I discovered another slow puncture and just rode on it for the final 3kms.

I genuinely loved every minute of the run as I have no idea how I managed to get there. Aside

from a few wobbly moments and running the final 2 hours in complete darkness, the run was great and I managed to finish just under the 4hours 30mins, leaving me with an overall time of 13 hours and 8 minutes.

In the end I really didn't mind being well off the time I was hoping for – I was just so relieved to have been able to finish it. All in all a great experience and a great race for anyone considering an Ironman distance triathlon.



Scottish Gas 10k

Julia Cunningham



Sunday 5 Aug. 2012

This was my one and only race this year, and since it's pretty much on my doorstep it would've been rude not to. I did it last year as well though it presented substantially more of a challenge this time round.

As with all Edinburgh Athletic Club races it is very well organised with plenty of marshals and run in a very friendly environment. It's good value for the entry fee too, you get a technical T shirt, running water bottle and plenty of food and drink afterwards. There's also an organised warm up to some thumping tunes, just to get you in the mood.

Living in the area, I know the route very well which is both a good and a bad thing. Good because there are no surprises, bad because you've run it so often you know just how far there is still to go to the finish. For those less familiar, it starts at the Scottish Gas Headquarters at

Granton and heads down onto the seafront, along to the flagpole at Cramond and back again. It's pretty flat apart from a steep path near the finish, but very exposed to the elements. Not much chance of getting lost and takes in the Edinburgh Park run route for those who know that course.

Last year's race was about trying to get as close as possible to a decent time given the limited training opportunities that come with full time working and full time toddler controlling. Mission accomplished. This year was about getting round the course, enjoying being out in the fresh air and not worrying about having to walk up any hills. Again mission accomplished, I managed a steady pace, was careful not to get too out of breath and savoured being part of a race again.

The time, and it so wasn't about the time, was 54.24 and my slowest ever 10k, but probably first place in the 5 months pregnant category (I didn't spot any other bumps but they could've been hiding under race numbers). The satisfaction and sense of achievement afterwards was just as great as if I'd run a massive P.B.

Bala Standard

Phil Parr-Burman



I've never had to wrestle my way over the finish line before. I've never seen anyone disqualified for running barefoot before. (Rule 28.3 "competitors may not run.....without shoes.....") I've never seen a staring stand off in the queue to get into transition before. All these things happened at Bala, and more! Read on.

Bala is one of the big standard distance races in the UK, set at Bala lake in north Wales. Its also a qualification race for next years European champs in Turkey, which is why I entered it, the Strathclyde organisers having made a Pact With the Devil and turned that race into a duathlon. It's also excellently run, by those nice Wreccsam Tri club people.

So to registration. Bala does the best freebie of any race I've been to. This time not a towel to match my other from 5 years ago (and still a favourite with my teenage kids) - they'd run out of those. Instead it was a head torch with rear facing red tail gate light. Not bad, but didn't set the pulse racing. Excitement mounted on looking into the bag though.

Stick on numbers! Now race belts are ok but all that flapping about of the number durin the bike leg! All that shifting it from back to front in transition. And don't you find that it never stays in the right place during the run? Then best of all - none of that felt pen business for the body marking.

We had transfers, like Alistair and Jonny had! Putting them on (hold in place with a wet tissue for 40seconds) made the gents seem a bit like the ladies powder room but the results, I think you'll agree, were worth it.

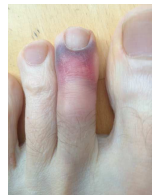


So to transition. Security was tight so there was a queue. Someone cut in, someone else commented, there was a face off, nobody actually got hit, but it was close. Tensions were clearly running high. One of the bikes clearly felt it, deciding to let go just as the transition was about to close (and after the first swim wave had left)

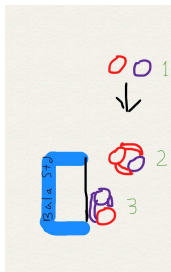
there was a loud pop as a tube had given up the struggle. Full credit to the marshals though who found the bike and fixed it.

The race itself went more or less to plan. I was in the 50+ wave, after a steady start I found myself close to the lead group in the swim and with a bit of effort caught them up, just hanging on to the last guys feet (not literally). But here's a learning point. When drafting in choppy water make sure you keep sighting every few strokes and don't decide to chill out with 10 or more face down ones. I lost him off to the right and too far in front. It was a lonely swim in—1 min down on the leaders.

The bike was uneventful, except I bruised my foot shoving it into the shoes at T1. The run also, for most of the way. I had been keeping an eye out for others on my age group. The numbers had been helpfully marked with a J. A hundred metres from home one last J passed. The sprint was on, it was neck



and neck for a while. What happened next is shown in the diagram.



1: he (in red) pushes into me (in purple). 2: I lose balance a little, grab him and we swap round (3) to untidily cross the line. (rule 22.8 (e): ...unsporting impudence....).

And here's some photographic evidence (I know it looks like we're holding hands)



So the stats: swim. Bike 1:04:10 (only 38k). Run 45:xx (10.25k - ok for me). Total 2:16:xx. 5th of the qualifier wannabes in my age group. Turkey is on!

Aberfeldy Middle Distance Triathlon

David Forrester



Having signed up for IM Austria (in a moment of madness) I figured it might be an idea to have a crack at a longer distance in advance of "the big one." Training had been anything but consistent in the lead up to the race so I was going in with a bit of an open mind.

The night before we stayed at Dunnolly House. When I booked the room several weeks prior I was surprised at how cheap it was, I also noticed there were surprisingly few pictures of the accommodation itself. Suffice to say the penny dropped big style when we arrived. The less said about it the better, but if the general state of the room wasn't going to keep you awake the double false fire alarm at 4am certainly did.

The day of the event brought a typical summer morning (overcast with light drizzle) but a flat calm loch Tay. I got the usual bike envy walking around T1. One particular racer caught my eye. He certainly looked the part with all the kit, with the obvious exception being his missing bike. Turns out his full carbon, roof mounted bike had picked a fight with the solid steel height restrictor at the car park entrance and had come off second best, the result being he was now competitor #1 of 1 in that morning's hastily arranged Aberfeldy duathlon. I felt some sympathy for him though. Just a few weeks earlier I had done the exact same thing but with better luck, the difference being I didn't need a brush and pan to pick my bike up after. And so to business, the swim went well, the water is quite peaty and seemed crystal clear for about the length of my arm then completely black thereafter. The result being a rather comical illusion where you see a mass of hands and feet but no bodies. At some point I could feel the rain kicking in and then the thought of 56 miles on the bike didn't really appeal. I managed to keep a steady pace and to keep the spirits up my somewhat flawed logic was to assume that anyone passing me must have been in a relay team...

I took my time in T1 (as usual) as I had decided that it was better to don cycling shorts and top for the ride. I had experimented with just the tri suit prior to the event and found that after an

hour and a half I was doing the usual "2 cheek shuffle" on the saddle so padding was definitely the way forward.

Other than the rain and the usual volley of riders piling past me I felt quite good on the bike. As I went over General Wade's bridge I noticed a parked car (without its rear windscreen) and a rather irate woman standing beside it. Turns out there had been a collision with a rider who had just got back on his bike and taken off again! By the time we got up the first hill the rain was off and it turned into a great day for a ride. I'm now used to being overtaken on the bike, but when it's still happening 30 miles in I think you have to accept there is a weakness on the bike and it maybe needs some attention! Still, I enjoyed the ride and I knew the route well as it's the same as the Etape, The hills are a bit of a killer, but there are also some fast, flat sections to get down on the aerobars. I never manage too long like this before my back hurts and I'm convinced I need a new bike. Budget negotiations with my other half are due to commence in early 2013.

Now this was my first even with a split transition. For those not in the know (as I was) this means T1 and T2 are in different places so you hand over a bag of kit to the organisers with everything you think you might need and rely on them to produce it at the correct moment as you come over the dismount line. Not so much at this event!

I was looking forward to the run, I've been doing a bit more of it lately and since we moved a bit further out of town I've been lucky enough to get out into the Pentlands on a regular basis. I set off at reasonable pace (foolish boy!) as I felt in good form, buoyed also by the fact that, finally, by mile 53 I'd managed to catch someone on the bike. (That said, it does burst your bubble somewhat when you are just setting off on the run and you see a bunch of guys just finishing it.) The refreshment/gel stops were every 3 miles which meant I was pumped to the gunnels with carbs, and what was this? Was I actually passing people? I started to keep count and at one point got to 20. I was also pleasantly surprised to see my other half at the turning point who cheered me on enthusiastically, much to the amusement of the marshal standing nearby. However, little did I know but I was obviously running on fumes by this stage and by mile 9 I felt monumentally crap. The pace had tailed off and a number of

"the 20" caught and re-passed me. Don't think the finish line could come quick enough, and after the tranquil (but supporter-less) surroundings of the run route, a bit of a cheer at the end was more than welcome.

If you're looking to make the step up from sprint/standard distance events then this is definitely an option. The scenery is fantastic and while

there are some chunky climbs it's very easy to get up there to familiarise yourself with the route in advance. The organisation may leave a lot to be desired and I'm not sure it represents great value for money, but do it once then decide for yourself.

A Highland Fling

Liz Sim



Being a Nairnite, Sat 29th Sep brought the perfect chance for me to do a 'home' tri at Nairn Sprint, run by Triathlon Inverness. You may recall from earlier ramblings that I had a fear of swimming as a kid, and Nairn pool has a lot to answer for in that matter. I still remember when it was a salt water pool and being told not to drown. Nice. The time had come to return and show that pool (thankfully no longer a saline bath) who was now boss. I was even happier when both Sharon and Chris Grimshaw, and Adam Maher signed up for the same event. 4 ETs all heading up to the sunny Highlands for the race. Nairn is a bit of a trek, so was it worth it?

Getting There ...

The A9 is awful, we all know that, but the joy of turning off at Aviemore to blast down the single track road to Nairn cannot be overlooked. The 'Dava' road as we Nairnite's know it is a must. Think rollercoaster with scenery, just don't go there in winter. Luckily this tri was in Sep, so snow not an issue. On this occasion, team ET were all staying over locally with friends, family and such like. Based on the distance involved and dodgy roads with slow caravans, this is highly recommended.

Race Day ...

Pre-race organisation was very good. Could

change swim times right up until 22nd Sep. Precise heat info was sent out the day before, including swim lanes, cap colours and start times for each heat. This was very handy. I was renting a flat and had timed that it took 4 mins 20 secs to get from flat to transition – Team ET HQ had been established.

Transition ...

I think last year was first year of Nairn Tri, and this year there were a lot more entrants. A lot more entrants means more bikes. More bikes means more racks. This is my one main criticism of the event, the transition area was terrible. I'd arrived at transition not long after it opened, but by that time had only room to dangle Madge on the end post of a rack. Racks were simply numbered by heat. There were no allocated slots, and it was like sardines. Lucky you didn't get a pedal through your spokes or caught up elsewhere – it was that tight. Found myself working out with neighbour who was likely to finish swim first so we could rearrange order of bikes to make enough room to remove bike. I had vision of whole rack falling and deeming the end of new bike. I was not happy. A couple of the racks were indeed threatening collapse, not sure if due to weight of the bikes crammed on top, or the wind. It was a tad breezy. Team Grimshaw and I decided racks were just too risky and parked our bikes on a grass bank opposite. Adam also had had to relocate as had racked in wrong rack originally. At this stage, Chris had to deal with an unfortunate valve problem. Once that was sorted, and compulsory race briefing completed, team Grimshaw and Liz headed back to ET HQ while Adam headed back to his family. Being the

slowest I would be in heat 4, with Sharon in heat 5, and the speedies Adam and Chris in heat 6. The three novice heats would go off first. Time for coffee.

The Race ...

I nearly missed it. Having had a relaxing coffee and change into our tri suits at ET HQ, we headed back across to the pool. At this stage I noticed heat 3 bikes had already gone from the racks. A quick trot though changing room and straight into pool was required. With 4 mins to spare I hit the pool. Lane was full, 6 folk. All about same speed though so worked out OK. Was suitably surprised when got bopped on the head for two lengths to go. A first for me too, Nairn so shallow I was able to get out without the steps. Run to transition was quite long, had to exit via changing rooms, then out and right round transition area. Some folk were transitioning in the changing room.

Cycle was hard on two counts. Main thing was the 20mph+ head wind on the loop westbound which we did three times. That wind was evil, no other word for it. Eastbound was nicer though. I was lucky as stayed dry, but Adam and Chris got caught in a downpour. Other thing was the location. To get out of town you have no option but to use main A96 Aberdeen – Inverness road for short distances. This means traffic lights at right hand turns as Highland Council seem to have developed a penchant for installing them. In total, 2 stop lines, 3 sets of traffic lights, traffic calming measures at railway bridge both ways, one pelican crossing, and one mini roundabout. Add to that pensioners who couldn't hear you approaching who had opted not to use the aforementioned pelican crossing provided.

First set of lights across A96 took ages to change, by which time any time you had made up in pool was lost as a large peleton formed. On a plus side it meant time to have a drink and a light lunch while waiting. Talking of peleton, no -one mentioned drafting at the race briefing. Might have been an idea to have done so. Was out in the country fighting the wind and could see large group riding in front. Someone else later on also said they had seen group of folk riding what looked like chain gang. I only gripe as I wasn't part of the gang so was struggling to get anywhere near them.

I met Sharon heading out on her ride as I was coming back in to town. Chris and Adam were just about to start their swim heat.

The Run ...

Head westbound from the pool back into the wind, then turn back and run along sea front to the harbour. At this stage it was nice to try and take in the view. The wind was a killer, but no doubt it's a great view. Cross the river then head upstream before turning at the road bridge. From there it was back the way we had come to the finish. On a nicer day it would have been most picturesque. Didn't see a water station though on the route – maybe there was one but I didn't spot it. The event was using chip timing, so could get times as soon as had crossed the line. The system was very neat – just enter your race number on keypad and it printed a receipt with all your splits that you could take away with you.

The Post Race Analysis ...

We didn't come back with any gold, but team ET had a good day nevertheless. Adam was 5th Senior, Chris 5th S/Vet, Sharon 2nd S/Vet and my good self 4th Vet.

Personally I was a bit disappointed by the event. The pre-race organisation was great, but on the day the reality didn't quite meet expectations. The cramped transition was a problem which I think could have been forecast and avoided – and hopefully will be for next time. You can't plan the weather though, nor relocate the A96 trunk road. Finding a cycle route that avoided that and the associated traffic lights etc. would be difficult. I felt it was missing on the atmosphere front though, for example I didn't notice any spectators when my swim heat was on (but then I was late to the pool so maybe there were folk there). I do recall seeing a spinning class or something going on in one of the viewing rooms while I was in the swim. Might be an idea to cancel that next year and get the space. The post-race cakes were very nice too, but if in later heats there would not have been any left.

It goes without saying though folk had evidently put in a lot of personal effort in setting up the race, and thanks again to all those who stood out in the wind and rain to marshal, and who baked the post-race cakes themselves. Would I go back next year – yes, as long as you promise there will be room to rack the bikes next time.



Ironman Wales

Donnie Miller



Stats were none to be proud ofI'm sure your sensing imminent excuses.....so not to dissappoint 1h12 for the swim (pretty chuffed) I managed to completely screw up my knee after 2 hours on the bike and I just couldnt put any power through my right leg. So the bike leg took me a whopping 7hrs 40 (really dissa-pointed as was hitting 6 - 6.5 hrs in training). By the time I got to T2 I could barely walk, let alone run, and if it wasnt for the fact i was doing the event for charity I would have pulled out. Limped/hopped round the marathon in 4hrs 40. So a total of just over 14 hours and I fear I;ve now got unfinished business with this distance!! On the positive side, IM Wales is an amazing event in a beautiful part of the country. The people of Tenby were just amazing. Never witnessed support like it.



One Season Ends, Another Begins

Richard Foxley



Part of every year is the usual pre-season training phase which is quickly followed up by the race season, the time when all the hard work, dedicated practice and off-season developmen-

tal gains are put into action. Following this pattern, after a busy, and hopefully successful race season, we are faced with the off-season. The efforts of the previous months will have taken their toll, both mentally and physically, which means the off-season all too often turns into a no-mans land of lost motivation, inconsistent and unstructured training and big fitness losses. Naturally we must all take the time to rest and recover properly once the race season comes to a close, but the time between race season and

pre-season training is where most of us lose out, wasting the previous 6-8 months of dedication and sacrifice, rather than harnessing it to become a major influence on next seasons goals and allowing us to take the next step up the ladder, both in terms of fitness and technique development.

Our physical objectives at this time of year should shift to enter a maintenance phase which will allow us to commence next seasons specific pre-season training from a higher level than if we stopped training and took the fitness step backwards. We're not talking large amounts of dedicated science-based training to achieve this either. Maintaining some aerobic exercise a few times a week should generally be enough to maintain fitness. Finding another form of exercise to do this can often be beneficial from both a mental and physical viewpoint too, some winter running or biking in the hills can be a welcome change which will still offer an aerobic workout. The change in focus for a while can leave you refreshed and ready for new challenges.

Mentally we should be making a shift too. For the summer months we've been concentrating on doing the little things to peak at the right time for our chosen races, so what should we be thinking about in the off-season? Well, put simply, you should be planning. It's probably the least glamorous part of training, but it's perhaps one of the most overlooked and definitely one of the most important elements of building towards a successful race season. Whether you want to do your first race in a new event, step up a race distance or smash a PB, now is the time to be planning it out and you don't need an expert coach to do some simple planning of your own. Here's a few steps to follow to help you plan out your next season:

Set realistic goals

Want to run a 20min 5K when your current best time is 21mins? Sounds achievable. Aiming to run a 32min 10K when your current best is 40mins? Sounds less achievable. Assess where you're at by looking at this seasons results and plan ahead according to that, not by what you wish you could do. The small improvements you make week to week will encourage you much more when you're working toward an achievable end goal. Look at your diary too, don't plan for your biggest race of the season the day after you get back from 2-weeks sunning yourself on a family holiday.

Work backwards

You've got your goals, you've identified your races so now work backwards. When do you

have to peak? How much of a taper do you need? How long a training block do you need to allow for? When do you need to start that training? What's that training going to be? Who's it going to be with?

Identify your weaknesses

Getting faster or making things easier isn't just about getting fitter – it's about improving technique and correcting flaws too. Whilst working on the things you can already do is easier and feels better, working on the things you can't do will yield the biggest improvements in the long run. It's always hard to evaluate yourself accurately so get a training partner or a coach at your local club to help identify the important points to work on. Improving these aspects of your sport is one of the best motivations to improve some more.

Address your weaknesses

Once you've identified what it is you need to work on, make sure you spend time working on it. Incorporate some technique sessions or specific workout sessions which target this element. One of the best ways to measure your progress is regular testing so include regular timed efforts over the same course to help quantify what you're doing. This way you know if you're doing the right thing to improve or if there's something else more worthwhile you could be doing.

Structure it

Make yourself, or invest in, a training plan.

Spend a little time each weekend looking at what did and what didn't work the week before and whether you need to do anything differently. Just turning up to do some exercise without any idea of what you want to achieve, or how it fits in with the rest of your training, won't help you improve. Knowing what you're trying to achieve in a session is the best way to get the most out of it.

Book it in

Get a training buddy or join a local club and arrange to go along to some group sessions. You're much more likely to stick to it, especially over the darker, colder winter months, and more consistent training will lead to bigger improvements in the long run. You'll always push yourself just a little harder with others around you and it's a great way to socialise too, so make the most of it.

With the summer drawing to an end and the dark nights drawing in it can often be hard to see through to next summers racing but as we all know, winter miles make summer smiles. So take a little time to reflect. Make a plan. And stick to it. It's the cheapest investment you can ever make in sport but may just be the best one you'll make.

Profile: Nicola Dudley

Describe yourself in 10 words

Always up for a new challenge, adventurous, determined

What age group are you in?

35-39

What's your day job?

Teacher

How long have you been an ET member and what do you like about the club?

Less than a month – and already roped into a profile! I have found the club very friendly and like the fact that the club welcomes all abilities and helps with development of skills.

What are your ambitions in triathlon?

To complete my first triathlon

What is your favourite club session?

So far I have only been along to swimming sessions

Did you come to triathlon from another sport?

I bought my first mountain bike about 15 years ago and got hooked on the adrenalin rush of off road biking. I eventually came round to buying a road bike when challenged to Land's End to John O'Groats 4 years ago. I enjoy running and ran my first marathon in 2011 in a very wet and windy Edinburgh. This was followed in April 2012 by the Paris marathon and Dublin is just a few weeks away.

What's your favourite piece of kit?

My mountain bike, until it got stolen last year – so now it's my road bike.

What one thing would improve your performance?

I have never been a particularly strong swimmer and until this summer only ever swam breast-stroke. I am now working on front crawl but have a long way to go.

What has been your best racing or training moment?

As a newbie to triathlon I don't have any triathlon tales to tell yet. Conquering Mont Ventoux in 35 degrees heat this summer was pretty challenging but fantastic - whilst en route cycling

from St Malo to Nice.

What has been your worst racing or training moment?

Taking part in the Strathpuffer 24 hour mountain bike with a route of sheet ice and no snow tyres.

....or was it flying over the handle bars and landing on a rock, breaking my pelvis and front teeth whilst mountain biking in Arrochar.

What is your favourite post-race treat?

A good slab of carrot cake, just like they used to serve at the Hub Café at Glentress.

Who or what inspires you?

Anyone who can complete an Ironman.



Profile: Lisa Magennis

1) Describe yourself in 10 words :

Occasionally motivated but unfortunately laziness often gets in the way

2) Age Group

25-29

3) What's your day job?

Trainee Solicitor (Editor's note: you can tell that by the fact Lisa has numbered the paragraphs)

4) When did you join ET and what do you like most about the club?

ET member since January 2012. Really enjoy the variety of sessions on offer, good quality coaching and friendliness of club members

5) Triathlon ambitions?

No major triathlon ambitions, I just really enjoy training and would like to continue competing and hopefully improving on my times in local races each year

6) Favourite club session?

Early morning swims!

Have you come to triathlon from another sport?

Yes – previously swam at club/local level

What one thing would improve your performance?

Bigger calves

Best racing/training moment

Aberfeldy Half Ironman – most enjoyable race to

date

Worst racing/training moment

2nd puncture 32km into the Ironman when I had only brought 2 spare tubes...

Post training treat – fried egg sandwich with lots of ketchup after a Saturday morning cycle

Post race treat – chocolate milk

Men with shaved legs – Yuk!

Women with six packs – Indifferent



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