

## **National Sprint Championships race report 29<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

Last weekend I travelled up to Belvoir Castle in the midlands for the first of the three National Triathlon Championships, this being the Sprint – 750m wetsuit swim, 20km bike and 5km run. The other two being the Olympic and Middle distance which are later on this summer.

I lined up with about 150 other athletes who were in my 39-49 wave waiting for the off. Soon I was in the midst of a mad throng of thrashing arms and legs all trying to take the shortest route to the first buoy. After the initial crazy start things calmed down and it wasn't long before I was climbing out of the lake. There was a very long run bare foot up to the transition, (approximately 500metres!), the longest I have ever encountered. It gave me a chance to compose myself and estimate that I was about 10<sup>th</sup> overall and about 40 seconds behind the wave leader.

54 seconds later I was out of my wet suit and on the bike struggling to find my biking legs as the bike course started off up a hill! However I soon got in to my stride and started catching other athletes, passing my main rival for Gold, Stuart, at the 10km mark, (Stuart was last years European Champion in our age group). By the 15km mark I was at the front of the wave but knowing that I would need a reasonable lead going into the run kept the pressure on for the last 5km.

After a fast transition of 1min 15 seconds I was into the run. I glanced over to see the rest all streaming into T2 behind me to rack their bikes. The 5km run started with a 400m flat section and then launching into 2 km straight up the side of a hill! With the sight of all those just behind still fresh in my mind I powered up the hill. When I got to the half way turn around I saw that I had a 40 – 50 second lead. The second half of the run was down hill and I concentrated on keeping an even pace and not cracking up. I crossed the line in first place, winning the 39 – 49 wave with a time of 1 hour 5 minutes 28 seconds. I was the first over 40 and 9<sup>th</sup> over all out of about 500 athletes. The winner did an amazing 1 hour 1 minute.

I would also like to mention my friend and occasional training partner Brian Grieson who also took gold in his age group – the over 70s. An amazing achievement, I wonder if I will still be as dedicated as he is at his age?!

We were presented with our medals and prise by Zara Hyde OBE the chief executive of the British Triathlon society who was a training partner when we were in Southampton City AC in our younger days. She was a talented international cross country runner and still remembered by those of us old enough to have been running races in the 80s and 90s. Small world!