

Ironman Portugal Cascais, 23/10/2021 by Steven Brew



Thursday 21st of October

Flight out of Dublin airport nice and early for the flight a full plane full of wanna be Ironmen athletes who were hoping to hear those magic words "You are an Ironman". The plane was full of smiles and excitement of getting to Cascais. Landed in Lisbon airport at around 9:15, the flight was about 2 and a half hours, taxi to Cascais is another 30 min or thereabouts. Getting to my hotel and seeing a Bentley outside thinking to myself "Jess what did you book?" There's a very high standard of hotel here anyways.

As I arrived early I wasn't let check in so I had time to make up my bike after the trip from Ireland. I had been carrying a bit of a knock going into this weekend so I wanted to try out the bike to make sure it was running perfect and also to get a bit of a run in. Everything went OK on the little test so quick shower and down to register for the race. The party atmosphere was starting to build up, it's what you come to expect from these races.

Friday 22nd October

Up nice and early and started to really think about Saturday, putting race numbers on my gear and bike bib number 999. Bike racking wasn't open until 3pm so I basically ate and sat around all day. Racked the bike around 3 and once that's done it's show time. Going into a race like this, once the bikes in transition there's no turning back, the training is done now go enjoy yourself. As you walk out of transition you get your timing chip, that goes straight on to your left ankle and as Trish Nicholls says: that's stays on your ankle once you get it.

Saturday 23rd October RACE DAY

Up around 5am, straight down to the bike load up the water bottles and put shoes on the bike, the normal stuff you do in a sprint. Head back to the hotel for breakfast, the hotel had a lot of athletes staying in it, the nerves and excitement in the room at breakfast is something hard to explain but in a good way, everyone wishing everyone good luck for the day ahead.

Swim:

Down to the pier for 7:50 swim start. Grand you might say and I would agree. I put myself into the 1hr - 1hr 10 swim time, figured I would get a good draft on the swim. The swimmers were let off in 4s every 4 seconds. Straight into the water and it was lovely and warm, I couldn't believe it for a sea swim. It went very well, I sighted better than I've ever done, I think I was only 100m out. Out of the swim you get a nice shower to wash off the salt water, then a 500m run to the bike. Taking it all in was my focus and listening to the crowd and family was something else unbelievable.

Bike:

Nice flat cycle for the first 20k, averaging 35-36k an hour. I knew there was a hill coming and did it come! 8k of 3% grade of climbing, then once that was done you climbed like a cork screw up the mountains. The climbing was very similar to Glendine from the Kinnity side but not as cold 😊😊. But what goes up must come down, coming back down off the mountain entering a small town and villages the locals cheering you on gives you a real buzz. My favourite part then, the F1 track, (I love F1 racing!) you do a lap of that then back into Cascais. You enter the town to hundreds of people still cheering, you cycle up the coast for 20k then turn around and head back onto the 2nd lap, where you don't do as much climbing there, about 1000m climbing on the first lap, 500m on the 2nd lap.

The run

The run was a simple out and back course, wind in your face on the way out and rolling hills. You get a good push on the way back in, plenty of aid stations on route every 2k or that. You go to the start finish line and turn around to start another lap, you'd be in a bit of discomfort here but the buzz of the crowd makes it all go away.

Getting to the finish line of an Ironman is something that anyone can get to, a little work and when you hear those words "You are an Ironman" it's possibly one of my greatest sporting achievements, to share it with Jess my wife, my cousins and parents-in-law is something very special.

I just wanna say thanks to everyone for the messages over the last few days, time for R&R now and beer.

Steven Brew

