

Metalman Middle Distance Triathlon 4th September 2021 by Dave Murphy

After 2 very confusing and unstructured seasons it was great to be back racing. Newtown Cove, Waterford, just 3k west of Tramore was the scene of the crime. I brought the family down for this one and we left Portarlington on the Friday evening. We booked into the campsite that was 100m from transition. It doesn't get any easier than that and this was the last thing that came easy to me that weekend.

Registration, Transition and the loot

With registration opening so early we were advised to bring a torch as it would be dark. Face coverings were mandatory in registration and transition. It was only at the swim start that we could remove our face coverings. Transition was on a closed road and one long line of racking that spanned around 400m. Registration and transition was seamless, and we were soon directed to an area called Guillamene Cove for the start. Although we received our goodie bags at registration, it wasn't until later that afternoon that I investigated the content. The backpack is good quality and will be useful. Two drink bottles a travel mug, a finishers medal/bell, 2 cans of strange flavored beers and a few other bits and pieces.



The Swim

Knowing it was a rolling start I made my way to the front of the crowd but not so close that I would be first in the water. I think I was one half of the 5th pair into the water 😊 It was a one lap 1900m clockwise swim course. I must say the water was not as cold as I thought it would be and more important there wasn't a jellyfish to be seen. The sea was calm with minimal swell but that could be different next year so don't blame me if you end up in a washing machine. The swim exit was at Newtown Cove, approximately 100m west of the swim start. As I stood up and checked the Garmin for an update, I was pleasantly surprised to see I was over 3 minutes ahead of plan.



T1

The run from the swim exit to transition was nasty. My trusty Garmin recorded 120m of elevation in transition alone. The road surface was also terrible with a coarse stone surface. As the transition from swim exit to bike start was 600m there was lots of oohs and aahs because of the underfoot conditions. By the time I got to my bike I considered taking my shoes off the pedals to save my feet from what felt like running on nails. This being the inaugural year we will learn from our mistakes and leave a spare pair of runners that can be picked up along the way. Some were wise enough to have done that this year. Thankfully I soon found myself sitting on my bike.

The Cycle

Nothing much to report on for the 90k bike course except the last 20k was torture. I'm not saying the first 70k was easy, rather the last 20k was ridiculously tough. Hills so steep that you couldn't but give your max to get to the top. 920m of elevation over the 90k is fairly tough. The course in general had a good surface and was reasonably well marshalled. On some roundabouts there were no marshalls but the road was marked with directional arrows so there was no switching off allowed or you could easily find yourself in Skibbereen or Drogheda.



T2

I remembered the feet and the oohs and aahs so I dismounted with my shoes still on. Nothing to report here either except you had to run all the way down through transition to ensure a neutral transition. This made T2 800m.

~~The worst experience of my life~~ The Run

I knew I hadn't over cooked the cycle because the legs felt good at the start of the run. I knew there was 268m of elevation ahead of me. The run course for some reason was only 18.5k and not the traditional 21.1k. I can honestly say this was the hardest 18.5k I have ever ran. The hills were relentless. You were either going up a hill or down a hill, no flat sections worth mentioning. Going down was almost harder than going up because the fast downhill turnover of the legs really impacted on the quads. The last kilometer was on a manageable downhill that incorporated running through transition and at this stage transition was busy with people finishing their cycle and starting the run.

The recovery area was unmanned (damn covid) there was water, Yoghurt, Creamed Rice, Choco & Strawberry milk, so not too shabby. I also met Conor Heffernan and Aisling Bohan who were there supporting a friend. The organisers, Waterford Triathlon Club put on a great race which I'm sure will be a regular on the TI Calendar. I'm not sure when but I feel I have a score to settle with a run course that kicked my ass. I'll be back!

