

# The first of many!!! Brendan Gleeson

Waterville Skellig half July 25<sup>th</sup> 2020  
(middle distance triathlon)

Ger asked me to write a race report after the Waterville Skellig coast triathlon 2020. I was putting it off because I thought that my very limited experience in triathlon wouldn't be of much use to most members but hopefully it gives new people like myself in the club a decent insight to a race.



## What drew me to triathlon?

Initially it was hearing about Ironman Youghal and the distances involved in that race, the draw of doing something that was going to be a real challenge and push me completely out of my comfort zone and find my physical limits. In the last few years I felt I'd already reached my mental limits dealing with our daughters illness, dealing with incredible lows and bleakness that came with that and now coming out the other side feeling relieved and lucky and that nothing is impossible.

## What's your tri experience?

I had no tri experience I knew nothing about triathlon I couldn't swim (started August 2019) I had knee ACL reconstruction surgery a few years back and I was nervous about running but I could cycle and had done a few leisure sports over the last few years

So, the obvious thing to do was sign up for an endurance triathlon 😂  
I had no idea what was involved in training or how important it is to have a complete family buy in and support to these events because it takes a lot of time to prepare and train and it is hard on everyone I've spent a year training 6 days a week most weeks for IM Cork. I followed a plan religiously and obviously the race was cancelled, I didn't want all the training to go to waste so I kept positive was still enjoying training so I refocused and set new goals Waterville Half/ middle distance July 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 and Hardman Killarney long distance August 29<sup>th</sup> 2020

## Best tips for beginners

Do not be afraid to join a club, I found it very intimidating joining the club, I had this image of everyone being miles fitter than me all 5ft 8 and 10 stone. That certainly is not the case triathlon is very inclusive and has all ages shapes and sizes, I found a great sense of community, friendship, and happiness in my short time in the club. Also, for beginners I think it's important not to underestimate yourself set large goals no one can stop you achieving you goals but yourself

## Race report from Waterville Skellig coast (middle distance triathlon)

It was my first race ever, but I felt reassured by my training. I always had a habit of playing out scenarios in my head for GAA matches when I played and I adopted this method for triathlon to so I knew I wanted to be cautious on the swim to save energy and go handy on the steep



descents on the bike, and hopefully I'd be comfortable on the run, I fuelled well for a few days before the race and felt really prepared, the day before the race I wrote a list of everything I needed on the day from gear to fuel and checked my transition bag at least 5 times I didn't want to forget anything, I had a lot of very helpful and welcome messages from a few club members the night before the race which gave me a good positive boost

I slept poorly the night before the race I had nerves and adrenaline pumping through me. The morning of the race I had a good breakfast and made my way from the B&B to Waterville to collect my race bag and set up transition it was great to see David Brophy there to on race morning with his camera and a few words of encouragement, I started to feel at ease and I was very lucky to have Donough, Stephen and Linus competing alongside me in my first race with their combined experience to reassure me and give a real feeling of being part of a club.

The swim was choppy but I was really confident and enjoyed every minute of it I felt great getting out of the water I ran into T1 had a quick transition and out on the bike course I had watched a few informative videos on the bike course so I knew it would be hilly and dangerous but I fuelled well and really felt good and enjoyed the bike it was a great relief to make it through the descent safely.

The last 20km was flat and I felt really strong, so I pushed a bit harder until T2 another quick transition and out on the run course this is where I nearly got caught out. I felt really good on the run driven by the thought of seeing my family on the course and knowing the run was the easiest part of the course I took off much too fast and about 2km in I got bad cramp in my hamstring I had to stop and stretch.



After a slight scare and delay I got going again at a more sensible pace pushed through another few km before I got comfortable again and thankfully I made it through having a looped course 4 laps meant the 4 of us from the club kept encouraging each other.

It was fantastic and was very much needed at certain stages of the run. Coming over the finish line was magic and having my family the lads from the club and their families was amazing. I felt such relief and a sense of accomplishment to finally get a race done

and for the first time feel like I could call myself a triathlete if I can do it anyone can!