

My first long distance triathlon, in my first year of triathlon. Hardman Full August 29th 2020 – Brendan Gleeson

Ger asked me to write my race report as its still fresh in my head and asked me to discuss under some of the headings below

Why Hardman?

My goal this year was Cork Ironman and with the cancellation of that race and others I had planned to race in I was not sure what to do. I was torn between stopping training then or risk doing Waterville and Killarney Hardman continuing training for the summer during a pandemic with the real risk these too could be cancelled but as I'd most of the work already done and thankfully I chose the latter and managed to achieve my goals for this year

How I felt?

Well I guess it was basically all the emotions really, this year and this race in particular tested me in every way imaginable, the obvious work load of training and time needed to train, lost family time and the mental battle of having to get up every day to train even when you don't want to and when your body is hurting which really hits the last few weeks before the race. This year was arguably made mentally tougher to train for an event like this knowing that at any time it could be cancelled, right up to a week before the event there were government restrictions put in place that I thought meant our race was over and I was heartbroken but thankfully a few days later we were informed it was still on

Week before the race?

This is a strange week to be honest I decided to take the week off work to rest and prepare everything. You are so used to training most days but now you do little or nothing your body needs to recover your mind plays tricks on you and your worried you should be doing more to keep the body going !!DON'T!!

I found sleeping really hard all week nerves, fear of failing and overthinking every possible eventually in your head all had a part to play but the night before the race when racking my bike I felt calm at ease and confident all would be well

Race day report!

Out of bed at 3.45 had some porridge and coffee and left home for Killarney at 4.15. I rechecked my transition box and set up transition I met the 5 other club mates in transition everyone looked ready and confident. Ger was a Technical Official on the day and came over with some words of encouragement which was much appreciated.

Swim!

I put on my wetsuit in transition, the water was perfect on the day so calm we were left into the lake 2 at a time 4 seconds apart I was in the middle of the pack which was



and advantage for sighting from other swimmers as the sun was blinding and made it impossible to see the buoys. The swim seemed very long and it was most of us racked up between 4km and 4.6km in the water, I got out in 1hr 31 much slower than I had planned but everyone had the same issue into T1 quick change and out on the bike

BIKE!



I cycled the course a few weeks before the race with Donough, Steve and Linus which was great preparation, I remembered Donough's words about not braking so much and being more aggressive ringing in my ears on race day, a few kms in I passed Tony he looked fresh and then at Torc Heather and Ed were waiting for us to give us a cheer then up molls gap the first climb I felt good all the way up and at lady's View I hear Linus behind me he looked very strong and passed me. I stuck to my plan of maintaining a good cadence and pushing on the downhills and flat. I had a fuel stop in Waterville with some treats to keep me motivated through the first 96km my fuelling tactic was 6 bottles of 750ml electrolyte and 8 cliff bars on the bike no gels or sugar and I felt really well fuelled throughout from Waterville to the end there was a strong headwind it made the bike gruelling. Ed Murphy was waiting again in Glenbeigh and really gave me a boost to break 6hrs on the bike just before the finish line I see Linus in front of me and it was great to make in into T2 together.

The Run!

We were greeted by cheers from the best support there on the day Mallow Tri members and our families. The first lap I felt great and thought this isn't to bad on the run I was going to use 2 caffeine gels, shot blocks, sweets and loads of fluid flat coke, energy drinks and water. Starting lap 3 I met Donough coming off his bike we had a few words of encouragement and then he took off on a strong run. Similarly on lap 6 I met Frankie arriving into transition as I passed, we gave each other a thumbs up and it was great to know that all 6 of us were on the run course and set to finish the race.



The first 5 laps went well I felt good but started to get sick of sugar I couldn't face anything but water from there on. Every lap I looked forward to seeing Ed who positioned himself on the hill or half way and the fantastic, noisy encouraging lads from the club Pauline, Heather, Steven, Sinead and our families near the finish line they were worth at least 10% more effort from us and made it a day I will never forget I really struggled on the last 3 laps but was determined not to stop and walk, the last lap was pure relief and adrenaline that got me through, crossing the finish line I was so overwhelmed and seeing my wife, kids and Steve there was great, we saw all our fantastic club mates over the line sharing an incredible journey together was magic.



Triathlon is an individual sport but during this race I've never felt so much part of a team we all looked out for each other and supported each other mallow tri club has a bright future!

Thanks to all the experienced athletes in our club willing to give endless advice and encouragement and Ger our coach who gave lots of advice and time massively improved my swim this year I managed to achieve what I set out to do in 2020 roll on 2021!!

Would I change anything about the race or my training going forward?

In short no I could not of given much more my ultimate dream goal on the day was under 12hrs and I got there maybe I could of in theory run faster on the day but in reality I gave everything I had. I'm going to work on my swim over the winter and bike handling skills and hope to complete Cork Ironman next summer