

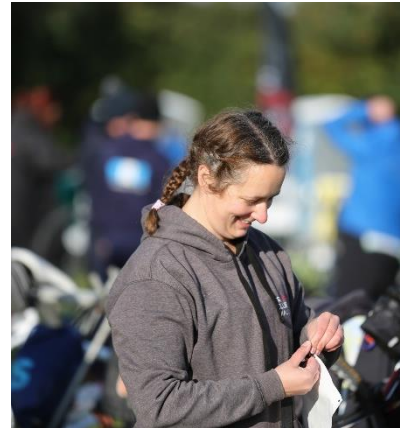
## **Ballyhass Sprint Triathlon Race Report – Elaine McSweeney 2020**

### **How did you get involved in Triathlon and how it has changed my life?**

I always admired my work colleague for doing Triathlons and in particular for completing the half Ironman in Spain. Since then I've said I would love to do it but I felt like I couldn't.

I had stopped running years ago because of an issue with my hip and then "life was busy". All excuses I know, and personally I felt Sh\*t, both mentally and physical. Prior to this I had always been active I did not like where I was or where I felt I was going.

So, in Aug/September 2019 I emailed Mallow Tri about the club. I got an email back from Ed with details of club run and was given Ger's details as a point of contact. I went to my first club run and could not run a lap without stopping but from the encouragement of everyone that night. I returned the next week and never stopped.



Club member, Mary Vowles said to come try the swimming. In the plan I had, I was going to get the running down first, and ease into this "new me" regime. But she insisted to try it and let me know that the first 2 sessions can be done without signing up. I did and that was it, I didn't stop going to the club sessions. The swim was a challenge, and I drank a lot of the pool in the first few weeks, but again with Ger's Coaching and encouragement, I now can swim distances I never thought I would ever do.

Since joining, I have made great friends in the past year through the club and that is invaluable. I am fitter, healthier, happier, and lighter than I have been in years. I am happiest when I work out and since joining Mallow Tri I have been consistent with my training which is key to achieving your goals – Also Mary V. wouldn't let me miss a night 😊

### **Why Ballyhass Sprint Race?**

I had signed up for other Sprint Races this year, but as the year rolled on, they all got postponed and then cancelled. As restrictions were lifted in June, we started getting training and seeing club mates. Swimming in Ballyhass, run sessions in Quatertown and Wednesday night TT sessions, all helped me to keep motivated and kept my training consistent over the summer. While races were dropping of the calendar, I felt like there would be no race at all for me this year. So, when the opportunity to sign up for our club race, Ballyhass sprint triathlon came up, as a Newbie to Tri, I jumped at it. This was going to be my first Triathlon and was so excited.



**Race Morning:** The nerves had started the week before the race as the temperature started to drop, all I could think of was the cold of the water. That morning my stomach was sick with the nerves but once I got to Ballyhass and meet my club mates I started to settle still worried about the cold.



### **The Race itself:**

The race was so well organised, and the layout was fantastic. I felt like a superstar with all the support and cheering as I passed every part of the course where other club members were marshalling. They were so supportive and encouraging to everyone.

**The Swim:** It took me a few minutes to get my groove in the water. I think the picture says it all- I was so cold. It took me 20 minutes to complete.

**The Cycle:** I had done this a few times both with the club and with on my own. So was confident I would get it done faster than any practice day, but that did not happen. I was a bit wobbly after coming out of the water and my legs felt slow no matter how hard I pushed on. It was hard seeing people coming back from their run as I was only coming back in the bike, but I said to myself that they have the fancy bikes or doing this for years.

**The Run:** Heading out on the run was tough at this stage I felt a bit sick, but this went after the Cecilstown hill as I was on the home stretch. Here I meet my sister who was marshalling who ran a bit with me and then I meet Sinead who ran with me to the gate which was fantastic- she distracted me with chat that I didn't slow down. Mary C. finished her race and even came back for me. I was overwhelmed by them all.

### **Any Mistakes:**

Yes, get over the nerves and practice transitions.

### **Did I hit my Goal?**

Yes, I did, I wanted to get it done in under 2 hours and I did that.

What a day for my first triathlon real buzz to it all, great to have one done in 2020.. roll on 2021.

