

Building up to Ironman UK later this summer, I thought it sensible to get a least one good Middle Distance race in the bag. The Swashbuckler at Bucklers Hard in the New Forest was around the right time and also meant it could be combined with a camping holiday with the kids. The race commenced at an ungodly 5.45am in order to catch the right tide for the 2k swim, the swim was uneventful with non of the promised jellyfish materialising. Transition involved a 400m run to the top of the hill to change for the bike. At this point I had to walk, which didn't bode well for later. Onto the bike, and try and eat something. I was worrying my breakfast had been a bit paltry, so needed to get something down me.

Unfortunately at this point the stopper on my handlebar mouted aero tri bottle thingie flew off and I was getting a drenching rather than anything down. Not nice when I'd decided to try out a thick carb drink, and that this was the bumpiest course I'd ever ridden. On the plus side it was so sweet that, what was going in my mouth was making me feel sick anyway. To cut a long story short the bike was a little slower than usual, but OK. Onto the run by which things are starting to hot up. I'm still nervous about the nutritional side of things but thankful to be off the bike (which is rare for me). Have gel for the first mile, no problems, other than the usual jelly legs and can start to feel my feet again.. I start to struggle on a small hill at mile 3 so have another gel, 5 mins later feel it's impact and back to normal running, this lasts about 10 minutes. I then reach for another gel and realise I've got none. I'm in trouble now and know that unless there are any gels at the aid stations I'm going to experience a major (apologies for the cycling terminology) bonk in a few miles time. Still I do my best to look on the brightside, with the Ironman to come it'll be good mental training running on empty for the last 7 miles or so. Suffice to say the bonk hit big time after mile 9 with some proper cramps in my calves. I slowed down and then run / walked the last 4 and a bit miles. In spite of it all I thoroughly enjoyed the race, well organised, fantastic scenery and unique race features such as horses on the odd descent and cows on the road coming into transition.

307 Finished

1 Peter Gaplin - Pactrac Swim - 1.9k 27.57 bike 80k 2.08.14, run,22.5k
1.25.02 total 4.01.15

107 Niel Dunnage - Cirencester AC - Swim 1.9k,30.58 bike 80k 2.17.45, run
22.5k 2.10.57 total 4.59.40

Note to self, a)eat breakfast, b)keep it simple c)drink/eat the same as in training, d)Get staff to pack up tent and 3 kids worth of accumulated camping holiday post race. Time 1 hour 55 minutes.