

Race Report: The Dyfi Dash Sprint Triathlon

23rd March, 2014

Bro Ddyfi leisure centre, Machynlleth, Powys

Race start: 9.00am

Organiser: Cerist Triathlon Club

Cerist Triathlon Club's traditional early season sprint triathlon, The Dyfi Dash, took place on Sunday 23rd March despite some wintery conditions. After heavy snow forced the postponement of last year's event, organisers were rather nervous after a cold, wet and blustery start to the day. Thankfully though the race went ahead as scheduled, and the atmosphere wasn't dampened in any way. There was added interest this year as the BBC were filming the race as part of a feature on the World Triathlon Series.

Entries were up on last year, with 59 competitors lining up for the 400m swim, 19k cycle and (very long!) 5k run. Pre-race talk focused on the weather, with mention of gloves and jackets for the bike leg! The first swimmers set off at 9.00am sharp, and there were some impressive times in the pool. Quickest swim of the day was in 5:32 by Helen Marshall of INTRtri, followed closely by Elinor Thorogood (5:35) representing Loughborough RC, who went on to win the female senior category in 1:06:08, ahead of Helen's excellent 1:08:09. Best of luck to Eli in her attempts to qualify for the Commonwealth Games! Third overall was Jessica Harvey in a time of 1:12:41.

The cycle leg presented the most testing conditions for the athletes. A biting headwind for the inward section, together with frequent rain and hail showers that left the road very wet in places, had the competitors (and brave marshals) feeling very cold and numb in places! The fastest bike time went to Daniel Thorogood, competing for the eventual winning relay team 'No Payne No Gain', with 28:34. This was only 21 seconds slower than his time last year - no mean achievement in these conditions - and the team's overall time was the fastest of the day, clocking in under the hour at 59:46.

Thankfully, it brightened up as the day wore on, and it was much warmer for most while out on the run. Last year's male senior winner, Cerist's Dylan Jones, was again sharpest on the run, posting 23:36, closely followed by the quickest male senior this time around, Andy Nash of Bangor University Tri Club, who ran in 23:39. Andy's overall time of 1:01:58 just edged out club mate James Briscoe into second place (1:02:48). Third male senior was Owen Mitchell, Swimpack RT, in 1:02:56. Only one junior entered this year, and Edward Evans (Craven Energy/Aber Uni) clocked a very decent 1:04:58, the sixth quickest individual time of the day.

Winners of the male vet, super vet and vintage vet age groups were Scott Patrick, Pembrokeshire Tri (1:04:16), Gary Taggart, Cerist (1:09:16), and Martin Garth Williams, Carneddau Tri Club (1:38:11), respectively. The female winners of these categories were Siân Stockford (1:25:29) in her first ever triathlon, Kate O'Sullivan, (1:27:08), and Angie Edwards, Cerist (1:34:46). Cerist was also very proud to see the return of Andy 'Gus' Rymer for his first tri after illness - welcome back Gus!

A small but noisy crowd braved the weather to support the race, and there was warm applause as each runner crossed the finish line at Bro Ddyfi leisure centre. After the event, competitors were very complimentary about the race organisation and friendly atmosphere, and they seemed to enjoy the bike and run routes despite the unkind weather. All in all, this year's Dyfi Dash was a very challenging but satisfying race for all. Several first-timers took part, with many pledging to enter the race again next year. Cerist Triathlon Club would like to extend their warmest gratitude to all who helped with setting up, marshals, timekeepers, registration officials and Bro Ddyfi leisure centre staff for their kind assistance.