

Race Report: The Dyfi Dash Sprint Triathlon

Cerist Triathlon Club, Machynlleth

19th March 2017

For the first time in many years Cerist Triathlon Club's Dyfi Dash was a sell out, with 120 competitors travelling from far and wide for this year's event. Stormy weather in the lead up to race day had Dyfi Dash veterans fearing the worst, but thankfully the rain held off and it was fairly mild on the day – however, the gusty wind remained and was a big factor during the race!

Among the field of competitors were many new faces, some of whom had travelled considerable distances for the race. Alongside the more experienced triathletes were many first-timers and novices, taking part individually or as part of a relay team (including a team of Machynlleth district nurses and two from the local Co-op!). Also in the starting field were youths and juniors, a partially-sighted swimmer (and close friend of the club) **Hazel Jones**, and two 70+ male triathletes! Cerist Tri Club is very keen to promote participation at all ages and levels, and this year they were very happy with the turnout.

The first swimmers went off at 9 o'clock sharp, and two of the quickest swims came from the Youth age group. **Nathaniel Harries** of Celtic Junior Tri, who went on to finish 2nd overall, registered a fantastic 5:16.8 for the 400 metres - one of the quickest swims ever seen in the Dyfi Dash! Not too far behind was **Mali Jones**, another highly promising young triathlete, who swam in 5:32.7. Third best swim was by **David Latham** in 6:14.9, with the ever-impressive **Helen Marshall** (INTR Tri), fastest female overall on the day, fourth quickest in 6:21.0.

As the quick succession of swimmers headed out of the warm pool and into T1, many pulled on jackets and gloves despite the time cost. The main talking point before the race was of course the wind, but it was only after the triathletes made the halfway turnaround at Cemmaes Road that they truly appreciated how strong it was - the gusting headwind was described by many as a 'brick wall', and it was a real grind on the homeward section! Despite this challenge though, there were many excellent cycle times posted, possibly aided by the large stretch of resurfaced road on the route. The fastest bike time was registered by **Andrew Poole**, the overall Male Open winner, in a very impressive 30:44.4. Second quickest was **Dylan Roberts** (Wreccsam Tri Club) in 31:27.9, followed by Dyfi Dash regular **Stephen Owen** in 32:06.4. In the female category, **Helen Marshall** took the honours on the bike with a time of 35:19.2, **Sera Mela** (INTR Tri) in 36:39.3 was second, and **Emma Palfrey** third in 37:05.8.

After T2 they headed out onto the scenic run route, which presents a steady climb out of Machynlleth, before two sharp hills and a fast final mile back to Bro Ddyfi leisure centre and the finish line. The whistling wind was again evident on parts of the course, but despite heavy legs there were many superb runs registered. For the women, quickest again was **Helen Marshall** in 26:04.4, with **Emma Palfrey**, 27:18.1, and **Alexandra Kilcoyne** (Leeds and Bradford Triathlon Club), 27:23.0, second and third fastest respectively. For the men, **Paul Johnson** (Leicester Tri Club) was quickest in 23:24.0, followed by **Marc George** in 24:29.4. **Andrew Poole** continued his strong performance with the third quickest run of the day, crossing the line in 24:33.5 to give him a very impressive overall time of 1:04:10.5 and victory in the Male Senior and Open categories. Helen's total time of 1:09:35.1 was an excellent ninth quickest on the day, and handed her the Female Senior and Open honours.

Special mention must go to the promising youngsters taking part today. **Nathaniel Harries** posted the second quickest overall time of the day - 1:06:35.0 - which for a 16 year old in challenging

conditions is exceptionally fast. We will surely see Nathaniel go on to compete at the highest level in years to come. **Mali Jones**, only 15, won the Female Youth category and finished as 6th fastest female overall in 1:21:16.1. Two ever-improving young triathletes from Cerist Tri Club also did very well, with **Lauren Watts** coming second in the Female Youth category, finishing in 1:29:47.1, and **George Horne** winning the Male Junior category in 1:20:26.9.

This year saw the return of an old friend, **Gwenllian Hughes**, who last took part in the Dyfi Dash in 2004 shortly after the sad loss of her mother **Sian Hawkins**, with whom she had competed at the race many times, and who by all accounts inspired many to take up the sport. Gwenllian competed this year in memory of her mum, and did her proud with an excellent race (her first for 10 years!) – finishing 4th in the Female Veteran category with a time of 1:31:18.9. Welcome back Gwenllian!

The weather is always a feature of the Dyfi Dash, but even more evident is the superb atmosphere surrounding the race. Every competitor complimented the Club on its great organisation and friendly welcome (and the race bag bobble hats went down a storm!). Whether the times were fast, slow or somewhere in between, the race was conducted in a fantastic spirit by all, and that certainly added to the occasion.

Cerist Triathlon Club would like to thank all who contributed to the staging of the race, in particular the brave marshals who stood for many hours in the harsh conditions to ensure the safety of each competitor, and to cheer them on loudly. Thanks everyone!

Category Winners

Female Youth

1st Mali Jones - 1:21:16.1; 2nd Lauren Watts (Cerist Tri Club) - 1:29:47.1

Male Youth

1st Nathaniel Harries (Celtic Junior Tri) - 1:06:35.0

Male Junior

1st George Horne (Cerist Tri Club) - 1:20:26.9

Male 70+

1st Terry Smith - 1:44:24.8; 2nd Peter Norman (Wreccsam Tri Club) - 2:04:37.9

Female Vintage Vet

1st Jill Hillman - 1:34:13.1

Male Vintage Vet

1st Malcolm Harrison (GOG Tri Club) - ; 2nd Elwyn Jones (Cerist Tri Club) - 1:39:36.61:19:48.0; 3rd Eurig Evans - 1:46:31.3

Female Super Vet

1st Beverley Smith - 1:35:31.2; 2nd Kathy Iffla - 1:41:12.2; 3rd Rhian Jones (Cerist Tri Club) - 1:41:44.9

Male Super Vet

1st Paul Johnson (Leicester Tri Club) - 1:08:35.7; 2nd Paul Algieri (GOG Tri Club) - 1:15:37.7; 3rd Gary Taggart (Cerist Tri Club) - 1:16:24.5

Female Veteran

1st Mel Gaul - 1:24:44.2; 2nd Claire Birch (OO Tri) - 1:25:43.2; 3rd Ruth Flatman (INTR Tri) - 1:28:45.2

Male Veteran

1st Stephen Owen - 1:06:48.7; 2nd Darren Jarman - 1:07:17.9; 3rd David Gethin (INTR Tri) - 1:10:31.3

Female Senior

1st Helen Marshall - 1:09:35.1; 2nd Emma Palfrey - 1:13:19.1; 3rd Alexandra Kilcoyne - 1:17:18.2

Male Senior

1st Andrew Poole - 1:04:10.5; 2nd Marc George - 1:06:45.0; 3rd Dylan Roberts (Wreccsam Tri Club) - 1:09:01.0

Female Open

1st Helen Marshall - 1:09:35.1; 2nd Emma Palfrey - 1:13:19.1; 3rd Alexandra Kilcoyne - 1:17:18.2

Male Open

1st Andrew Poole - 1:04:10.5; 2nd Nathaniel Harries - 1:06:35.0; 3rd Marc George - 1:06:45.0

Relay Team

1st Dazed & Confused - 1:08:11.8; 2nd Must Tri Harder - 1:13:03.0; 3rd Mach 1 - 1:28:31.8