

Race Report: Dyfi Standard Distance Triathlon

27th July 2014

Aberdyfi / Machynlleth

Race Start: 9.20 am

Cerist Triathlon Club

The tide times this year made for a very early start for Cerist Triathlon Club's standard distance race, with club officials and helpers gathering from 5.30 am for last-minute preparations and registration setup. Race HQ was at Bro Ddyfi leisure centre, Machynlleth, and the early risers were greeted by a beautiful summer's day, although thankfully it was much cooler than the recent scorching weather. As this is a split transition race, after setting up their running kit in T2, competitors decamped to the nearby fishing village of Aberdyfi for the sea swim and T1.

Apart from a slight breeze, which picked up a little as race start approached, conditions were good. The water temperature was an almost tropical (for Wales!) 17.5°C, and there were thankfully fewer jellyfish around this year. At 9.20 am the race began, and the 37 competitors took to the sea from the beach for a 1500m circuit which saw them head out towards Machynlleth and then back along the sea wall to the start point and on to T1. The tide hadn't quite turned as the swimmers headed back in, which resulted in a tough second half of the swim, but there were still some very impressive times. INTRtri's Helen Marshall (FS) exited the sea well ahead of the field in a superb 20:48, with Simon Crowther (MS), also of INTRtri, second out in 22:18, and Ian Houston (MV), Wreccsam Tri, third in 23:26.

As the triathletes set off from T1 into a slight headwind for the stunning 40k ride to Machynlleth (via Tywyn, Tal-y-Llyn and Corris), the skies clouded over slightly. Despite it being holiday season, the winding roads were fairly quiet. The tough climb from the shadow of Cadair Idris to Upper Corris always presents a challenge, but the race leaders pushed hard for the final descent toward Machynlleth. First off the bike was Ian Houston in a time of 1:10:23, followed by another veteran, Pat Kinch of Churnet Valley Tri, who clocked the quickest bike time of the day, 1:09:59, and the leading male senior, INTRtri's Andrew Poole, in 1:10:45. Helen was still going strong with a time of 1:17:39, and Andrew Birch (MV) of Trismart, 1:13:24, Paul Ingram (MV) of SYTri, in 1:13:48 and Dylan Jones (MS), Cerist Tri, in 1:16:50, also put themselves in contention for top three finishes in their age group.

Conditions were again hot for the now-legendary 10k run, which takes in a 2-mile hill climb before looping back on forestry roads to Forge, and finally to the finish line at Bro Ddyfi leisure centre. The drink stations were very welcome in the heat, and after the seemingly endless climb the fast downhill section allowed the runners to stretch their tired legs. Despite the heat and the climb, some of the run times were hugely impressive. Ian Houston capped a very consistent performance with the quickest run, 41:12, to comfortably post the fastest overall time of the day and to win the male veteran category in 2:15:01. Andrew Birch came in second with 42:41, a total time of 2:19:57, followed by Andrew Poole in 44:36, 2:20:27 overall, to win the male senior age group. Helen Marshall clinched the female senior race with a run of 48:09, which gave her the fifth fastest overall time of 2:26:36, and Cerist Tri's Gary Taggart took the male senior veteran honours with a very creditable 2:28:50 (26:46 / 1:15:15 / 46:49).

Special mention must go to Daniel Speake of Cerist Tri, who was competing in his first ever triathlon. After a promising swim, he suffered a puncture before Corris but still had the determination to finish the race - crossing the line to huge applause in a time of 3:33:52. Well done Dan!

Cerist Triathlon Club would like to thank all who helped plan and put on the race, including marshals, leisure centre staff, and the Aberdyfi harbourmaster, Outward Bound and RNLI. Feedback from the competitors was universally positive, with particular praise for the friendly atmosphere and challenging but spectacular course, and the club hopes to build up this race in coming years.

Selected results (see www.ceristtriathlon.org.uk for full results)

MS: 1st Andrew Poole (2:20:27); 2nd Dylan Jones (2:27:32); 3rd Darren Jarman (2:28:53)

FS: 1st Helen Marshall (2:26:36); 2nd Jessica Harvey (2:33:37); 3rd Alison Pickard (2:49:37)

MV: 1st Ian Houston (2:15:01); 2nd Andrew Birch (2:19:57); 3rd Pat Kinch (2:22:43)

FV: 1st Andrea Vaughn (2:39:12); 2nd Claire Birch (2:50:04); 3rd Sarah Wilding (3:19:46)

MSV: 1st Gary Taggard (2:28:50); 2nd Nicholas Farnell (2:32:03); 3rd Anthony Price (2:35:39)

FSV: 1st Kate O'Sullivan (3:08:48)

MVV: 1st John Williams (3:23:26); 2nd Peter Norman (3:43:34)