

Mansfield Tri Club – Race Report
Quelle Challenge Roth - 13th July 2008

Name	Stuart Pinches
Email	stuart.pinches@tesco.net
Race Name	Quelle Challenge Roth
Date	13th July 2008
Type	Tri
Distance	Ironman
Venue	Roth (South Germany)
Course	Open Water
Weather	Shocking
Race Contacts	www.challenge-roth.com/en/index.html
Competitors	Chris McCormick, Bjorn Sindeballe, Thomas Helreigel, Yvone van Vlerken plus 50 other world famous ironman racers
Overall Result	12.22.42 (1629th)
Other Result	417 AG
Club Results	None
Winner Info	Patrick Vernay 08.09.34
Race Report	My first crack at an ironman distance race. But why Quelle Challenge Roth not the usual IM Germany, France, UK or Austria. The answer because of the atmosphere. The Germans are triathlon crazy and there is generally upward of 300,000 screaming fans with rattles, cowbells and car horns. Don't believe me then log on to You Tube and type in Solarer Berg. Imagine biking through a crowd like that!

This was a well planned road event. I had signed up in July 2007 and at that point July 2008 would never arrive. I set a plan and despite a few setbacks - broken ribs after a fall in October 2007, Achilles injury in Feb 2008 I arrived at July having had no issues with my training programme. My goals

- 1) Complete it - this was 90% of what I needed to achieve
- 2) A time of 11:30-12:30 - almost irrelevant if I achieved no1.

We travelled as a family in the car from Worksop to Dover, ferry to France. Drive through North France, Belgium, Netherlands and into Germany on Wednesday evening, staying over in Koln. It stacked it down with rain for the whole trip. However next day we woke to sunshine and the simplest navigation step in the world - Join N3 autobahn, continue 237 miles on N3, you have arrived at your destination. A very small village called Wallesau just outside the race venue. We were camping and all was Ok until fri lunchtime when it rained and didn't stop until Sunday night after the race. 'Most unusual' the locals declared!

I managed to get a quick bike in on Friday - rolling terrain but beautiful road surfaces - the folks responsible for the road through Clipstone should take note. On Saturday morning you were allowed to swim in the race vanue - a canal. Again the complete opposite to the UK, Good quality water, 50 yards wide and over 20 feet deep in the centre...oh and 21.5oC.n On Saturday PM the bike was racked and race clothes put into bags for the various transition points.

All prepped I got an early night, aided by one Weisbeer to calm the nerves. The alarm went at 3.30am on Sunday 13th July and I came too with rain lashing against the tent. the family were at the race start for 5am. My wave was off at 7.30. I took time to do last minute bike checks, load the bike bottles up with energy drinks and got into my Mansfield tri suit (no changes for me Mansfield from gun to finsh line), wetsuit (not compulsory because of the warm water). At 7.30 to some cheesy German europop anthem the male 40+ group were led to the water - the crowds at this point wwre amazing. I took a gentle swim up to the start line and then a cannon went off - this was the start of a long day.

As it was a waved start there was not too much struggle to find clear water and too be honest it was one of the most straightforward swims I have had - up the canal 180o turn back down the canal, past the start point, 180o turn back to start. I was out in 1;15;51 - 4 mins ahead of my best schedule. I donned arm warmers for the bike because the temperature was only 12oC, raining with gusty winds in the Franconian hills at the botom of the course.

The bike route was a 2 lap affair. I quickly got into a rhythm then at 5 miles my front gear shifter stripped a thread and would not let me select the big ring. The nearest bike service point was at 30 miles. I battled on trying to pull the level back to hold it in gear. This meant being in an uncomfortable position on the bike..this would come back to bite me later. The nice men of Mavic fitted a new bolt and I was on my way. The crowds were great, every village had music - again cheezy german europop blaring out whilst the locals sat at tables alongside the road getting drunk in the rain. I was at T2 where my bike was whisked from under me and taken away in a very professional manner in a time of 5:59.33 - about where I needed to be. Onto the run. take it easy and find my pace (8:30 min miles). First mile was 7:30, way too fast so eased up. As we hit the run along the canal the wheels became detached from my effort. Whether it was the uncomfy position held on the bike for over an hour or whether it would have happened anyway - my lower back seized up. I managed to carry on til 6 miles but by now was running at a weird stooped angle to prevent spasm. I stopped at a feed station in the pouring rain - looked at my time and knew that I could walk the 20 miles and still hit the 15 hour cut off. So I was going to finish, just not with the time I deserved. I continued on a run, stagger, walk regimen and finally realised that I could post a sub 5hour marathon with some luck. As I entered the finishing shoot my time for the marathon was 4:55:02 giving a total time of 12:22:42. I was overwhelmed - both objectives achieved.

The recovery was not an issue - I went swimming in the campsite's private lake - no writing in triplicate to the council or arguing with the fishermen. No stiffness or injuries, even my back quickly eased up. Then the drive home from Germany.

Even two weeks on I still feel that I have achieved a great personal goal and need to thank my family for their support, not just on race day but also through all my training this year, I know it has interfered with so much. 'I will only ever do one ironman distance race to get it out of my system' is what I said last year. Currently my finger is hovering above the enter button

for Challenge Barcelona in October 2009 - there is unfinished business.
Anyone fancy it?