

Mansfield Tri Club – Race Report
World Triathlon Championships – 7th June 08

Name Hannah Mulcaster
Email mullyh41@hotmail.com
Race Name World Triathlon Championships
Date 7th June 2008
Type Olympic Distance Triathlon
Distance 1100m Swim/40Km bike/10km run
Venue English Bay, Vancouver, Canada
Course Open water, undulating bike and run
Weather Cold, but at least dry
Race Contacts ITU, www.triathlon.org
Competitors 96 in my age group, 18 from Great Britain
Overall Result 23rd in age group, 8th Brit

Other Result

Club Results

Winner Info Michelle Wu, Australia, 2hr 00.14

Race Report This had to be the biggest and most nerve racking race I have ever done, but for me I was surprisingly calm the morning of the race. Do not know how with the previous few days weather.

We arrived Tuesday lunch time and were transported to our apartment in Vancouver, which turned out to be massive. We had two double rooms with two bathrooms. Marshall (my bike) even had his own room with glass walls overlooking a fantastic skyline of Vancouver when it was not raining (we were 15 floors up). After packing my bike away myself and finding it was not that difficult i decided with chris's help to put it back together again. Which was fine, no hick ups, took him for a test ride and he was fine. There were back up mechanics if required.

Prior to the race i was nervous, sleeping was difficult. I would wake about 5am (good for race day prep) but not good for catching up on sleep. So I would generally go and bike the course whilst it was quiet. Later in the day it would be streaming with bike traffic. Each day though it was always cold and wet.

We were totally not prepared for the weather. It was only as a last minute thing that I packed my water proof cycle jacket, it was a staple wear for at least the first week. As you will see by the photos Jayne did not take a coat and had to resort wearing Shamu!! A pack away plastic Mac that my mum had took for emergency.

Thursday morning i went down I managed to finish doing my bike recce just in time to watch the juniors' race. Kirsty McWilliam was brilliant. Those kids must have been freezing. One poor USA girl fell off her bike right in front of me on a tight corner, but she just jumped straight back up and carried on, god that must have hurt.

Due to my early starts I always felt I needed an afternoon nap. One afternoon whilst sleeping Chris, Jayne and my mum chased around Vancouver trying to find me some arm warmers. Due to the worsening weather these seemed to be the item of choice for the bike and run. Unfortunately everyone else was doing the same so a lot of shops sold out. But luckily they found some in a downtown store. I was so grateful, but luckily they were not needed.

Friday morning we had our race briefing, everything was running fine. There were concerns about the swim, rumours of it being shortened due to the cold (11 deg). But it was said that they would decide race morning. Had our official team photo took, there was alot of us. The official opening ceremony had been cancelled due to the rain, so many, including myself did not attend the pasta party. It was a long way to go for a bowl of pasta, and we were all sick of getting soaked wherever we went.

Finally Friday afternoon the sun came out, which was good as we were all stood in a queue for our an hour just to get into transition to rack our bikes. The atmosphere was building. There was over 1000 people all racking their bikes. Mum had even made Marshall a plastic cover out of carrier bags to keep him dry. A lot of people had been in the sea for a practice swim, but I really could not see the point. I went in up to my knees and ran after. Boy it was cold. It took ages for my toes to warm up and start functioning correctly.

Left transition, and headed back to the flat for lovely pasta dinner and early night. Very patriotic of me I painted my toe nails with the Union Jack flag.

Woke early around 4.30am, managed to get some porridge down me and headed off to transition with Chris. We were only allowed into transition between 5.55 and 6.55, as our race started at 7.25. Everything was laid out and ready to go. Put on my wetsuit and headed down towards English bay. This was a 20 minute walk as it was a point to point swim rather than an out and back. Again we were only allowed in the water 10 minutes prior to the start of our race. I had cotton wool in my ears to keep the cold out, and a pair of socks to cover my hands after the warm up swim. I jumped in and realised what all the fuss was about, it was freezing. Did a quick warm up and jumped out. We could not tell at this point how choppy the water was. I was nervous, Chris said I looked as if I was about to cry, but really I can't remember, I was too cold to remember.

We all had to line up on the carpet. They told us it had been reduced to 1100m due to the cold. The horn sounded and we were off. Jumped into the water, the cold hit you again. There was the normal jostle for positions but then the waves started. You felt like you were not getting anywhere. As we headed out from shore, we had to push through the waves, but after 300m we turned and swam parallel to the shore, this was when it became difficult. The waves were pushing you into shore. They were so big you struggled to see the buoys that you were meant to follow. It was a case of following the person at the side of you. As I was so concerned with the waves I did not feel the cold from then on. Felt like I swallowed so much water.

Exited the swim and could hear Chris and Jayne shouting. There was about 100m run in so my wetsuit was down at my waist as I got to my bike. It came off so easily, god I was happy as that was what I was stressing about the most. They had said that we did not need our numbers on for the bike, this allowed people to put jackets etc on if required. So all I had to grab was my helmet, shades and bike. Off i ran, remember passing alot of people, god they seemed to run so slow through transition with their bikes. Jumped on, but struggled for a few seconds getting my shoes fastened (hands and feet so cold). I was off. Even though i had

cycle the course for the previous 3 days, it was a lot harder than i imagined. It was 4 10km laps on the bike. The hill at about 6km was hard for one climb, let alone when we had to do it 4 times. A couple of GB girls came past, i really tried to go with them (but not drafting) but they were too strong. For those who have done the relays, it was worse than that. Everyone passing on the left or the right, there was the AWAD athletes as well. As you completed one lap you passed near transition. This was amazing as for the next mile the road was lined with supporters and shouting and cheering. The final time I headed up the hill I was so glad as my legs were knackered. Just as I headed up the hill another GB girl came past, this time I did not let her get away. As we came towards transition my feet were out of my shoes, jumped off and ran as fast as I could to rack my bike. Passed the GB girl so was pleased. Grabbed my shoes, struggled slightly as my toes were so cold. Grabbed my number, shoved it on as ran out of transition.

The run was 3 loops. A shorter one at 2.7Km and 2 longer ones at 3.6ish Km. Due to the course you passed each other a lot, i could see a couple of GB girls ahead but they all looked to be running so well. I just dug in and ran my own race. It was easy to see if anyone you passed was in your age group as we all had it wrote on the backs of our legs. I think I passed a fair few on the run. Everywhere I seemed to be I had support off Chris, Jayne and Mum. I think Chris and Jayne ran my mum to death getting from one spot to the next. As I headed out onto my final lap I was knackered, I even had to check with Jayne as i ran past that this was it. On the final lap I chased down 2 more in my age group. On the last little climb there were two AWAD athletes in their wheelchairs, they looked as knackered as me, as they were hardly moving. How they did the bike course then the run course powered by their hands I do not know. They are a true inspiration. Headed down the hill towards the finish, saw Jayne hanging over the fence with the GB flag, grabbed it and ran in.

It was such an amazing feeling to cross the finish line with the GB flag held high (well as high as my tired arms would hold it). The crowd support was excellent. They quickly wrapped you in tin foil (ready for the oven!!). Chris ran round and I got the biggest hug ever. I was so tired I could hardly stand. Grabbed the free

chocolate from the athletes lounge (true scouser) I felt a bit better for eating something.

That afternoon I chilled for a bit and went for my first alcoholic drink, full on cocktail!! I have never truly felt that tired after any race previously done, so it showed that I must have given it everything I had. When I checked my times I was so happy as I had done a PB in my run, 40.21 so I was over the moon. Did not manage to split my bike times, and the swim was short.

All I can say is that it is a fantastic race to do. I would recommend it to everyone who does tri to try and qualify. After my rest and recuperation I will be back to training. Not sure about next year's qualifiers as the race is in Australia!! At least you think sunshine would be guaranteed.

The next day watching the elites was fantastic, I lost my voice, got Helen Tucker to sign my race programme, and met Graham Bell, and got on the BBC. How to complete a fantastic few days in Vancouver. I have some fantastic shots of the elites if anyone wants to see them.

Thank you for everyone's help and support from the club. Anton, Paul and Sally for my top, it was very kind of you. Everyone else who watched on the day, thank you