

IM Copenhagen race report

I think it was shortly after the Cotswold 70.3 mass Tri-Surrey outing that I thought why not go the full distance. I thought a year of training should be ok! I discovered Training Peaks and signed with a British Triathlon and IM Certified Elite coach Paul Gardner of Lovetri Swimwerkx Race team who set up the training. The first contact with him was on the phone and he told me (on speaker phone) to stand up, feet shoulder width apart, close your eyes, lift arms out to the side then raise right knee to chest. 1.5 secs later I nearly fell over. "Ok you're not using your glutes properly..."! The coach, Paul lived in Berkhamsted, so I knew I wasn't going to see him much, but I wanted him to have a look at my level of technique etc. We ended up actually meeting up a couple of times in Hertfordshire and Provence. "Greg how do you swim?" "Greg how do you run faster?" "Greg how do you improve on the bike"? I didn't know the correct answers to any of the questions but found out over the course of the coaching process



The plan started with 50 weeks to train. The training peaks schedule was really hard for to me maintain with all the travelling I do with work. However, there's an app to find the nearest swimming pool anywhere in the world, most hotels have a gym for bike, and you can run anywhere. No excuse really. Two months living and working in Spain was pretty good for training and I got to grips with the schedule a bit better after asking the coach to reduce the hours. INJURY happened on holiday in Lanzarote. I went back too hard after a break and got a peri Achilles tendinitis. How you deal with it is half the battle, I guess. I did a bit



more bike and swimming. Anyway jump 8 weeks before race and I'm training much better. This is a race report not a bloody autobiography. Sorry!

So, I'm on the start line with Adam "sub 10" Wade and very excited about starting something I had no idea what the outcome would hold. I didn't have a pre-race warm up as I don't really at Divers before I swim. So, I thought just start slowish stretch out and relax. The sun actually came out during the swim so all quite pleasant. It was quite busy, and I found myself swimming around quite a few people. Watch buzzed at half-way and I thought about looking at my pace but then thought just enjoy the swim. WATCH OUT I just swam between two guys coming towards me.

Had I drifted or were they swimming on my side? Didn't matter no head on collision. The only thing that confused me a couple of times in the swim were the guys in the kayaks were wearing a similar colour to the buoys. Coming to the pen ultimate buoy and a sharp turn my left hamstring just froze as cramp set in which I've had in the calf before but never from the back of my knee to the bottom of my glutes.

I keep the ankle stiff and hoped for the best. I thought 'No please' not this early in the day. I'd taken a PH salt tab the night before and in the morning. Keep going, keep going. It began to disappear, and I got out of the water and walked and felt nothing untoward. Watch 1.03 happy with that, not under the hour but well pleased. Long run through transition and hoped I'd put the fight things in my blue bike bag. Wetsuit off pink socks on and a gentle run to the bike 2999, end of the row and quite easy to find. Great this is going ok and screams from Laura and Mark send me on my way. Then more screams and cow bells from Emma Bartolo!



Nutrition on my top tube bulging (Andy Cowen asked how long I was planning to be away on the last Tri Surrey bike ride) and 12 OTE gels in my bottle I'm all set for 6.15 hours as prescribed by my coach. "Let them overtake you" he said. I knew I was going to see a lot of nice bikes fly past me and yes, the TT disc wheel bikes sound like stealth bombers. Zzzzrrrooomm Zzzzzzzrrrooomm. 'Ooh nice bike', 'ooh another nice bike'..... All ok I'm in Z2 and that's where I planned to stay for quite a while. Next zone was Z

zero - PUNCTURE! 14 mins into the bike back wheel off repair kit out. More nice bikes went past some with sympathetic head turns.

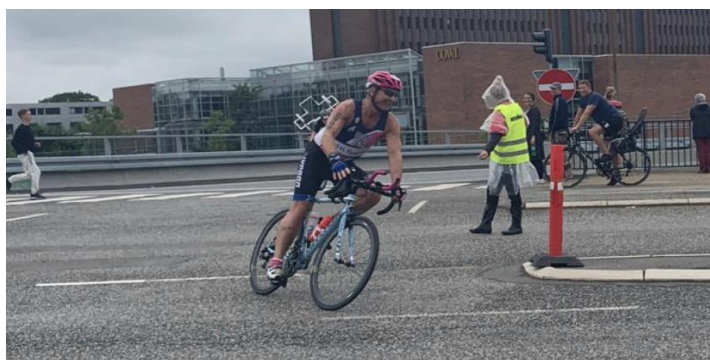
So, I had to change a new tube for wheel with deep rim and luckily with pavement new tube new and as if Hells Angel jumped off a Kawasaki over the wheel and watched an F1 air canister and the wheel back on



the first time since I was 16! So, the new new long valve tubes was on the by magic my Guardian Angel and not a and said, "Want a hand?" I just handed style slick wheel change. Whoosh from "you're good to go". Bloody marvelous.

Forgot to mention when I pressed "ride" on the Edge 520 at the start of the bike it resumed the ride from the Andy, Thalia and Steve, the 90k ride (cake at Chartwell) a week or two previously. It's all a bit messed up now Edge says one thing watch says another. Just get on with ride and drink and eat. It became quite undulating once I came off the coast, and luckily the sun disappeared and was overcast. I stayed in Z2 with a little Z3 and used the tri bars as much as possible thinking free speed. However, alternating from hoods to tri and drops for some reason made the left tri bar come loose and it was flapping about. I stopped for a comfort break and free banana and Allen keyed it tightly only for it to become loose again. I stayed on drops for a long time but started to get annoyed with not being able to be aero. I stopped again and this time sorted it out properly. I kept the mantra "free speed, free speed" going whenever I went on the hoods and stayed on tri bars more than I thought I could. Suddenly in the middle of the Danish countryside some cycling club members dressed in yellow club kit were cheering me on with a Mexican wave, quite bizarre.

I joined in both arms up and subsequently headed for the ditch. (Stupid idiot) Ooh nearly. More undulating scenery and then back into what seemed like civilisation and then suddenly as I came around a bend more Tri Surrey support thanks to Emma who had driven out especially to cheer us on, Adam, Sara, and Allesandro. After the first 90k loop another comfort break and banana I set the bike computer back to start so I could tell distance and see cadence. The elite women now started to whizz pass me, so all going well but wow 180k bike rides are lonely places. I thought my average



pace was ok and I was in Z2. Going through some forest areas with a few inclines and descents was fun and a couple of times I adopted the super tuck position free speed, free speed (I blame Alaphilipe) hahahaaa passed a few cyclists hehe, then saw them again on the flat. Coming back into Copenhagen a chap passed me shouting "go on Tri Surrey, I'm from Reigate".

Nutrition wise I'd emptied the bottle of 12 gels and had a few more, plenty of water/energy drink and was now starting to un-Velcro for T2. This is where I saw people running! I have never been drawn to run a standalone Marathon and here I was with 180k bike legs about to start one for the first time. You don't know what you can do unless you try attitude kicks in. Brooks on, cap and shades for the fine drizzle ☹️ (every long run was cap and shades) race belt with Cliff bars and Bloks. Here goes.

The crowd cheering at the start was really encouraging and passing Laura and Mark at the start of a marathon brought the enormity of it into perspective for me. They'd come a long way to cheer don't let them down. BUT HEY SLOW DOWN. Zone 1.9 is good but not this pace (5.10) I slowed the cadence down, but the cheering pushes you along. I'd planned to walk through the feed stations to drink water only and to help wash down the Blok I was taking every 20 mins.



WAVE WAVE or react, say something that was Sara who just shouted at you. Pro Tri Surrey Cheerleader 📣 Emma popped up again and again she was in about three or four locations it seemed with a cow bell. All the support helped me keep a smile on my face. I found it hard to believe I was running a marathon in Denmark.

Each 10k you received a coloured band the last one being blue. Mantras started forming in my head "I want the blue band I'm gonna get the blue band" Another feed station and then I caught up with Anna from Colchester who did her teacher training in Crawley. She was on a walk run plan, so I left her to catch up with Robert from Guildford. We ran together quite a while then I started chatting. Not very talkative was Robert but we must of run 15k together. We were both on the same coloured bands.

He would pass me I would pass him. More cheers from Laura, Mark and Emma "Austrian Cow Bell" Bartolo

and random strangers who must have tracked my 2999 number to know my name, amazing. Robert and I still neck and neck at the feed stations. Quite out of the blue suddenly I became very hungry on the 3rd 10k lap so Enervit energy bars and half bananas were going down a treat at nearly every feed station. Robert, it seemed took longer than usual at a feed station but was slightly ahead of me and on passing him I said "I'm sure you'll catch me up" which he did. Pace was about 6.10 which was fine, slightly slower than my fantasy pace for a 4.04 marathon. I hit 34k and had never ran that far and felt good.

My coach had said if you feel good at the end of the marathon, pick it up with a about 2 or 3k to go. I was 8k from the end when my Alistair Brownlee fantasy vision of dropping Robert from Guildford occurred. I picked up the pace a bit in the technical cobbled section and lots of cheering. It was properly raining now, and I was soaked but not cold. I warmed up a bit and the blue band mantra was about to come true. This felt really good. Inside the last 5k and about half an hour to run, I started to tot up the times. This was to fantasise of sub 12 and kill time during the last few k. My trackers Laura and Mark were seeing the real times mine were approx they later told me they didn't want to shout "go for it you're close to 12" so as not to put any pressure on me. Anyway, with about 1.5k to go it all felt it would never end. Luckily Robert didn't go past me.

When I could see and hear the finish line, I sprinted passed a few to finish in 12.06 Elation! Over the finish speakers I heard

“Greg from the UK you are an Ironman”



Coaches Note: as we like to say athletes don’t rise to the level of their expectations, they fall to the level of their training so for someone who’s schedule was all over the place, the improvements in run and swim were truly surprising and deserved. His focus on technique saw him go from a 90-minute IM swim to just over 1:03. And overall, the support from his club and friends meant, as you can see, he was smiling most of the way

NAME	COUNTRY	DIV RANK	GENDER RANK	OVERALL RANK	SWIM	BIKE	RUN	FINISH	POINTS
Walmsley, Gregory	GBR	181	1453	1624	01:03:29	06:21:20	04:26:05	12:06:24	2775