

Lakeland Epic Triathlon Challenge Roundup



Looking optimistic and totally oblivious to what was to come in the next 3 ½ hours.. 😊



Just approaching the half way point, most of the feeling lost in both hands and feet by this point, weather conditions had deteriorated at this stage and the mental battle to keep going was just beginning, this was going to get tougher as the swim went on...



5 minutes from the end, at long last !!!, 3 hrs 30 minutes of continuous mental and physical effort was coming to a close and at last the sun came out

Just thinking about getting out of this lake and getting a nice hot meal

Day 1 – 11th MAY
Coniston Lake Swim
5.25 miles -3 hrs 35 mins

The Coniston Lake swim was a tougher physical and mental challenge than I had anticipated, After 24 hours of torrential rain prior to the swim the intense cold temperature of the lake had played a major part in this. The swim started well with calm water and good progress was made in the first hour or so, feeding regularly and trying to ignore how cold I was getting, I was trying to stay focused about keeping my stroke strong, and keeping my hydration and nutrition to plan, but after 1 ½ hours I had begun to lose feeling in my hands and feet which created problems trying to hold the water bottle and gel flask at feed stops, Also the weather conditions had worsened which created choppy conditions in the lake. During the next hour it became harder to keep the pace up and my mental strength was severely tested but after many months of training for this challenge I wasn't going to crack on day 1, so just tried to stay as positive as possible and keep swimming as strongly as I could, and after 3 hrs the end of the lake came into sight which was a massive mental boost to kick on and get this over with !!! It felt great to finish the swim and I could take big positives from the way I had dealt with the challenges and conditions.

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Day 2 - 12th MAY

The K2B Challenge

40 miles – 7 hrs 27 mins

The last few metres of the K2B
Run

Day 2 started at 3-45 am with a big bowl of porridge with banana, which was quite a struggle after the interrupted night's sleep I had suffered due to the large amount of water intake from the swim.

The journey up to Keswick only made my nausea worse and I was glad to finally get out in the fresh air and get started on the K2B at 5.57 am

The first 5 miles were slow going due to a couple of stops to get rid of more lake water (I won't divulge too much here but it wasn't very pretty ..) I decided to try and maintain a steady pace and hope the nausea would pass and focus on reaching the first checkpoint at Grasmere, things started to pick up slightly from here and after going over Red Bank and descending into Elterwater to the second checkpoint I began to feel more confident. The run from here to Tarn hows and then Coniston went well and at a much better pace than before and I reached the head of Coniston around 30 minutes down on where I had planned but thankfully the sickness had passed and I felt more focused for the remaining 22 miles ahead ...

I decided to just keep up the pace I had settled in to and be happy with the way I had dealt with the early part of the run, the east side of Coniston went without a problem and after topping up my hydration pack at Lowick, I started the steady 3 mile incline to the top of Kirkby Moor.

This part of the route is challenging to say the least and I had a bit of a low point half way up but remained focused and tried to maintain a steady pace and concentrate on my nutrition and hydration.

It was at this point when I met Jason who had biked out to meet me and a mile further on my family were waiting, this gave me a big boost and not wanting to look as though I was suffering too much I tried to push on to the top where George H was waiting to spur me on as only he can!!

Things went well from there to the last check point in Dalton. After this point it's a big mental boost to know there are only 3 miles to go and you can actually think about stopping!!!, The run down abbey road felt longer than normal but I knew the finish was close so just tried to maintain a steady pace to the line.

Day 2 completed....Onwards and Upwards to Day 3 (Bring on the Fred !!!)

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Paul, Steve and Myself at the finish of the Fred Whitton cycle Challenge

Day 3 -13th MAY

Fred Whitton Challenge

112 miles – 9 hrs 0 mins 07 secs

After a better night's sleep, Day 3 started bright and early again with another bucketful of porridge...



And then it was off to Coniston for Registration and to meet Paul and Steve who had kindly offered to stay with me on the ride.

We rolled away at 7-45 am and within 5 minutes started the climb up Hawkshead hill, I felt a bit anxious at this point because my energy levels felt quite low and having ridden the 'Fred' before knew exactly what lay ahead. The first 2 hours or so took in the climbs of Kirkstone pass and Matterdale End which made for slow progress but I was staying focused on keeping my hydration & nutrition to plan, and over the next hour I began to feel much stronger, mainly thanks to Paul and Steve who put in a great effort into a block headwind on the A66.

Then came the scenic run down Borrowdale leading to Honister pass which is the first of the really steep climbs. My plan was to try and maintain a steady pace up the climbs which went well over Honister, and shortly after, we reached Buttermere YHA and the first feed stop.

Newlands pass came next and then the lovely ride back into Keswick before the ascent up Whinlatter pass. The climb up Whinlatter was very cautious due to the first twinges of cramp in my legs which made me slightly concerned but I tried to stay positive and rely on my plan to stay hydrated and carry on at the good pace we were setting. After Whinlatter came the first check point and having made the 1 o'clock cut off I could relax a bit knowing I would be able to finish the ride and the weekend Challenge..

Then comes the daunting prospect of Fangs Brow and Cold Fell which don't get much publicity but are hard climbs in their own right, and the strong wind made them even tougher but again Paul and Steve put in a great effort and made it much easier for me. After Cold Fell it's down to Calder Bridge and the second feed stop which was very welcome. I filled up my bottles and topped up on flapjack and Tuna butties here in preparation for the final 30 miles which would include the notorious climbs of Hardknott and Wrynose pass which arrive after cycling 95 miles or so !!! but my plan to ride a steady pace on the climbs had worked so far so I was feeling positive about these two, the pleasant

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ride up Eskdale valley was a bonus due to the headwind now turning to tailwind and all looked good for Hardknott and Wrynose...

The climb up Hardknott was a brutal as ever but staying focused on my pace I rode up to and passed the first set of hairpin bends, and then there is a chance to recover slightly when the road becomes less severe before reaching the steepest parts of the climb near the summit of the pass which again I tried to keep the pedals turning at whatever speed I could.. then came Wrynose and the last climb of the day, which again was tackled as before, head down and grind out as steady pace as possible at this stage of the ride...

After getting over the top of Wrynose there was a huge sense of relief knowing that there are only 8 or so miles left to the finish , and the end of my Lakeland `Epic` challenge.

So... after 3 days of physical and mental endurance it was finally over , completing the challenge filled me with a sense of achievement knowing that the many months of training had paid off.

Acknowledgements



Ken Richman, for his support during some very low points in Coniston , it was much appreciated (I won't be doing it again mate so you can relax... 😊)

To Janet for keeping an eye on us all the way

And Paul , thanks for being there at the end

(It was as tough as you said .. and some)



All the Tronic K2B Support Crew, Mark, Chris , Roy and Vikki

Janet and Becca for your support

Paul for your encouragement on Abbey Road

Acknowledgments... cont

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Acknowledgments... cont



To Paul and Steve for their fantastic effort in the wind on the Fred Whitton and for encouraging me all the way , it was very much appreciated fellas

Also to Physio Mike Maguire for keeping me in peak condition physically and mentally in the weeks leading up to the event and for the positive thinking and massages, making sure I was always prepared to tackle the next day`s challenge in the right frame of mind , your work was appreciated mate..



Many thanks to everyone who sponsored me for this challenge, your generosity raised a magnificent total well in excess of £2000 for Ulverston Sandside Lodge School, Furness General Hospital Oncology Ward and Macmillan Nurses

And last but by no means least....

Special thanks must go to my wife and daughters without whose continued support and encouragement , none of this would be possible...